

Hafa Adai!

Torres forewarns businesses of possible closures. **PAGE 3**
NMI gets \$366.9K for emergency anti-COVID-19 measures. **PAGE 6**

Saipan Tribune

75¢

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 57

www.saipantribune.com

MONDAY MARCH 23, 2020

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1st COVID-19 death in Guam

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Guam has the unfortunate distinction of having the first death due to COVID-19 in the Pacific. This, after the U.S. territory's Joint Information Center reported that a 68-year-old patient with underlying health issues, compounded with COVID-19, died at the Guam Memorial Hospital yesterday at 1:30am.

» **US territory has 12 new COVID-19 cases, 27 in total**

See DEATH on Page 4

Man drowns off Micro Beach

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

A man was pronounced dead over the weekend after drowning off the coast of Micro Beach last Saturday.

According to sources, the

male was a fisherman of Filipino descent. He was pronounced dead Friday evening after drowning while allegedly fishing.

Sources said there were three other individuals with

See MAN on Page 4

FOR ALLEGEDLY NOT COMPLYING
WITH QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS

Guam governor wants US attorney removed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Describing the behavior of U.S. Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the NMI Shawn N. Anderson as arrogant and disrespectful, Guam Gov. Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero has demanded his removal

» **Anderson: I was not coming from high-risk countries**

from office for allegedly not complying with quarantine re-

See GOVERNOR on Page 4



PRICIER THAN GOLD?

Despite a price-freeze directive by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, many stores have jacked up the prices of their hand-sanitizers and alcohol. Torres signed Executive Order 2020-03 last March 5 declaring the price freeze. A person or business found to be in violation face a \$10,000 fine and up to one year in jail for each violation.

KRIZEL TUAZON

14-day quarantine for all CNMI arrivals

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres ordered Friday a more stringent 14-day quarantine for people coming to the CNMI beginning today, March 23, following the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Guam.

"COVID-19 is spreading in Guam," Torres stated.

"Further discussions with the [Commonwealth Health Care Corp.] indicate that, given the CNMI's resources, prevention and containment of COVID-19 would be best aided by having all persons entering into the CNMI be quarantined in a more closely-monitored environment than self-quarantining would provide."

See 14-DAY on Page 4



INSIDE



LOCAL

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be doing a civil works study of Beach Road.

PAGE 9



BUSINESS

Ta Bun Kuy, who is originally from Vietnam, believes there is a market for PHO 8.

PAGE 13



WORLD

The virus pandemic advanced yesterday after the U.S. and Europe reported new cases.

PAGE 16



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Local

Torres mobilizes entire Cabinet

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres rallied all heads of his Cabinet Saturday morning to discuss updates on the measures being taken by the government to tighten its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the meeting, Torres asked everyone to prepare to mobilize their staff should there be a situation where their offices will be asked to perform work

related to COVID-19.

The governor essentially gave the same instruction last March 16, when he placed the CNMI under the state of public health emergency and the continued state of significant emergency, when he stated that, despite the government shutdown for two weeks, every department will remain on stand-by should its services be needed.

Torres said that, regardless of the status, whether its aus-

RELATED NEWS

- Torres announces federal assistance for COVID-19 response. **PAGE 7**
- SBA offers disaster aid to CNMI small businesses. **PAGE 8**
- Steps taken to address COVID-19 issues. **PAGE 10**

terity Friday, 64 hours, or on lockdown, if an employee gets called to work on COVID-19, the employee should jump up and work on COVID-19.

"I know it's a challenge moving forward, but I really need you to be on the top of our issues," Torres told the heads of his Cabinet. "Everybody in this room holds a position for a reason, so do I. So

let's go and let's make sure to take all the precautionary measures for all of your staff."

"We ask you for your leadership ability," Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said. "There are going to be situations where an office or department is going to be asked to perform work directly related to COVID-19. Please understand that once that request is made, have

your employee there."

As the threat of COVID-19 moves closer to the CNMI, with Guam's 26 confirmed cases, and yesterday's announcement of one death—the first in the Pacific—the CNMI is taking no chances and is taking all measures to ensure and safeguard the health of all of its residents.

Torres assured that federal support is on its way, that the CNMI is not alone in this crisis, and that he has been work-

ing with the U.S. Small Business Administration to provide economic injury disaster loans for our affected businesses.

"This crisis is bigger than politics and bigger than ourselves," Torres said.

Acknowledging that this is a challenging time for the Commonwealth, the governor reiterates that "if we all work together, help each other out, and promote social distancing, we can beat this virus."

SF-based airline combines with investors planning Rota casino

A San Francisco-based airline is merging with a group of Korean investors that is planning to put up a casino on Rota, according to Commonwealth Ports Authority board's Airport Facilities Committee chair Barrie C. Toves yesterday.

Toves disclosed that IH Group Corp. has tied up with Boutique Air and that the airline is going to be called IH Boutique Air. He said IH Group took over Rota Hotel and Sunset Villa Hotel.

Rota Treasure Island Hotel & Casino was the first casino that opened on Rota, but did not last long.

A source said the main financier of the first casino was a Japanese investor named Watanabe Masahiro.

The source said the local owner of Rota Treasure Island Corp. has also forged partnership with IH Group.

The CPA board briefly discussed Boutique Air's plan during a recent meeting.

Toves said in a recent interview that the merger's intention is to assist with the transportation needs of the IH Group's customers of the hotel/casino and, at the same time, provide interisland airline service between Saipan, Rota, and Guam.

He said CPA executive director Christopher S. Tenorio just reported to the Airport Facilities Committee that he had "word" with Senate President Victor Hocog, (R-Rota) who is the main contact, that put CPA in communication with the Boutique Air out of San Francisco.

Toves said that he sent CPA board director Tomas Villagomez to meet with Boutique Air on his behalf, last year, as he couldn't make the trip.

Toves said Tenorio and board director Pete P. Reyes spoke with Hocog, who informed them of some sort of delays with the airline project.

Toves said the project is not on hold per se, but because of the current situation with the COVID-19, he believes the chief executive officer representative from Boutique Air has been stuck in South Korea.

He said the CEO representative should be coming to Saipan to look at the facilities and establish whatever needs to be started up for the operation.

"Rota has already prepared. One of the airline counters there, they are ready to receive once they come in," Toves said.

He said they were expecting the airline's planes to actually be in the CNMI since last month.

"We're expecting also that they're going to start having mobilization and movement this month in the first week but because of the issues... what can we do?" Toves said.

He said they were anticipating Boutique Air to start operation out of the CPA's facility with Skydive temporarily because they gave them a lease on old Freedom Air's space so they could start getting their maintenance hangar.

Asked if Boutique Air will also provide services on Tinian, Toves said they haven't discussed that yet. "But when we were pushing for the airline incentive program. My mission... is to cushion the impact of Cape Air pulling out," he said.

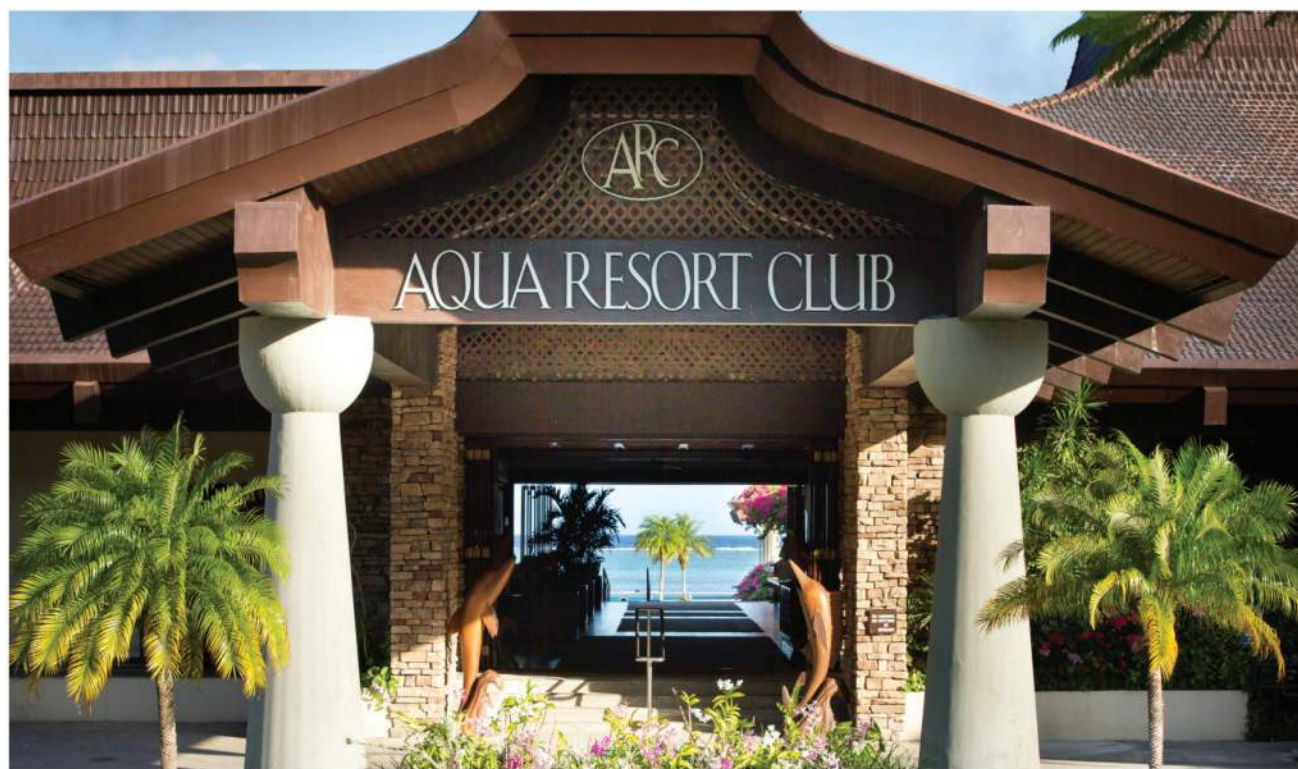
Right now, Star Marianas is the only service provider for Rota.

"We're feeling the impact now. Go online and you see there's no seats available for the next three days," he said. "So if you want to travel, you have to make arrangements ahead of time, probably two weeks to be on the safe side."

Toves said having IH Boutique Air as an additional airline operator would give people another choice. "It is very difficult, especially when we have regular medical referral patients that are going interisland for medical services," he said.

Toves said they're working hard to try to assist Boutique Air in whatever way that they can. "We have the facilities ready for them. It's just a matter of them coming in and starting the operation," he said.

Toves said that Boutique Air will be building a new maintenance hangar with the property that they just leased. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**



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Torres forewarns businesses of possible closures

By **IVA MAURIN**
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is forewarning CNMI businesses of possible closures as part of the government's aggressive campaign against COVID-19.

"We're asking our business partners to please work with

us," he said during a KMPP interview Saturday morning.

Torres appealed for the business community's support that, should there be a directive for businesses to close as part of the measures to secure the island from the novel coronavirus, for businesses to do so willingly.

"If there's a directive to shut it down, it's for your protection, and for the community and your patrons that support you," the governor said.

Torres highlighted the crucial role of businesses, and asked for understanding should the government shut down restaurants, or

when only a few gas stations and bars are permitted to remain open.

"It's for everyone's benefit. ...Your financial loss, at the end of the day, is a gain when we don't have any of your employee or any of your compatriots, or anyone in the community, having this virus," he said.

There are restaurants that have remained open, while some have transitioned to providing purely take-out and delivery services.

"I have always been pro-business. I've been supporting every business out there that asked for support. ...[Now] I'm asking all the business community to understand that, when we do a lockdown, I ask that you happily close it down for the safety of your staff, safety of your patrons that come to your bar or restaurant, and to everyone," he added.

The governor related it to the criticisms the administration received following the issuance of the executive or-

der that placed CNMI under a state of significant emergency. "When we did this executive order, some criticism said, you're killing our tourism market..."

Torres clarified though that, in doing so, the CNMI's tourism market is saved. "For me, I'm actually saving our tourism market. If we're able to shut everything down—and we know that [with] this virus, [we're] trying as hard as we can—if we come out here with very minimal damage in terms of health issues, we'll work on our economic upturn later."

Meal distribution to continue until school resumes

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Public School System Child Nutrition Program, with help from the Office of the Governor COVID-19 Task Force, will continue to provide meals to students until classes resume but, instead of serving the food in school cafeterias, it will be handed out in a type of "grab-and-go" setup.

In an interview with Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, he said that PSS has decided to continue the Child Nutrition Program while classes are suspended beginning March 25.

"We do have some reluctant

workers from the vendors and the school site, but we were able to recruit 13 people who will undergo certification training until Wednesday for the food handlers," he said.

Ada said the test run for the meal distribution will be on Tuesday and the actual distribution will begin on Wednesday to get the logistics in place.

"We're expecting a lot of hiccups because this is our first time. We will have walkers separated from the drive-through. We're going to do a dry run on Tuesday to make sure logistics are taken care of," he said.

The meal distribution sites

will be Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, Tanapag Middle School, Garapan Elementary School, Oleai Elementary School, Dandan Middle School, Marianas High School, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, Saipan Southern High School, ChaCha Ocean View Middle School, Chalan Kanoa Head Start, Tinian Elementary School, Sinapalo Elementary School, and Dr. Rita H. Inos Jr./Sr. High School.

Meal distribution will be from 9:30am to 10:30am.

According to Board of Education chair Janice Tenorio, PSS will provide three

See MEAL on Next Page

'Platform that collapsed manmade, belonged to IPI'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The platform that collapsed at the construction site of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's casino-resort project in Garapan that left three workers injured last Jan. 10 was manmade and belonged to IPI, the Commonwealth Casino Commission learned.

According to the latest minutes of the CCC meeting, IPI assistant vice president of construction Eric Poon has assured that, since the incident, weekly scheduled walkthroughs on the site were implemented with the participation of management staff and DR Safety Consultants.

In response to CCC chair Juan M. Sablan's inquiry, Poon said the platform was manmade, but he declined to answer whether it met federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's requirements due to ongoing investigations.

In response to CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero's question, Poon divulged that the platform was IPI's property and not the subcontractor. Poon said that IPI has since taken the platform down.

Stressing that CCC's major concern is the safety of the workers at the site, Sablan urged IPI to focus on safety to avoid future accidents.

Then-CCC acting executive director Charlie Atalig report-

» **IPI assures that since incident, weekly scheduled walkthroughs on site implemented**

ed to the board that, shortly after the incident, personnel from the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services and Department of Public Safety dealt with the situation onsite. Atalig said CCC agents were also deployed to monitor.

Atalig stated that the three injured individuals were brought to the Commonwealth Health Center and released later the same day.

He said the incident did not affect IPI's gaming operations.

Poon explained that the workers weren't seriously hurt.

Since the incident is still

under investigation, he said he has no information to update the commission, but assured that once the report is available, a copy will be provided.

He further stated that IPI is cooperating with the local government in its investigation, which includes DPS and the CNMI Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Poon said DPW issued a stop-order to IPI that lasted a couple of days and, during that time, intensive safety improvements were made on the site with the coordination of DR Safety Consultants.

Deleon Guerrero requested that IPI submit a copy of the investigation report and findings to the commission.

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DEATH

From Page 1

The patient was originally admitted to GMH on March 15 and remained in isolation throughout the week. The patient was among one of Guam's initial COVID-19 patients.

The patient had no recent travel history before contracting the virus, but initial investigations indicated the patient may have contracted it from someone who did. The JIC report did not indicate the gender of the patient.

As this developed, the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services said that 12 individuals tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday, bringing Guam's total to 27 positive cases, with one COVID-19-related death. All 26 remaining confirmed cases are in isolation.

A total of 153 tests were performed in Guam from March 12, 2020, through March 22, 2020, with conclusive results.

DPHSS also said that, based on a contact investigation, at least two individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 frequented the Håfa Adai Bingo Hall in Tamuning.

As a precautionary measure, all individuals who visited the Håfa Adai Bingo Hall between March 6 and March 16 are asked to self-quarantine at home. Should any of these individuals experience flu-like symptoms, immediately contact the Medical Triage Hotline for screening at: (671) 480-7859; (671) 480-6760/3; (671) 480-7883; and (671) 687-6170 (ADA dedicated number).

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, along with her chief medical advisers, Dr. Mike Cruz and Dr. Joleen Aguon, urged everyone to stay home,

exercise good hygiene, wash your hands, and practice social distancing by maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet between yourselves and others. Though these measures are not dramatic, they are the most effective things we can do to combat the spread of COVID-19, she said.

Leon Guerrero also met with her Physicians Advisory Group, a group of bipartisan community physicians committed to stopping the spread of COVID-19 through coordination and expert advice.

DPHSS, along with health care providers, various government of Guam agencies, and its military counterparts are working to contain the spread of the virus.

Currently, the hospital staff that cared for the patient, and any COVID-19 confirmed patients, are on a strict monitoring, checking in regularly with updates regarding any signs or symptoms. Health officials will continue to screen all who have come in contact with COVID-19 confirmed patients.

Torres extends condolences

With Guam's first confirmed death due to COVID-19, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres issued a statement that read, "Lt. Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios and I, along with our Commonwealth, extend our deepest condolences to the family of the first COVID-19 related death [in] Guam. Our thoughts and prayers are with Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, her administration, and the people of Guam."

Torres stated that he is in close contact with Leon Guerrero over the last week, and was assured that her administration is doing everything they can to protect Guam. In addition, through their partnership,

letter to Barr, Anderson, through U.S. Attorney's Office law enforcement coordinator Carmela Rapadas, said he did not come from any high-risk countries as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

"Attempts were made to reschedule an early return, but the cascade of flight cancellations prevented him from doing so. In the interim, he communicated remotely with the offices on Guam and Saipan, in addition to the Department of Justice and

various working groups," Rapadas stated in her letter to Leon Guerrero.

Upon arriving in Guam, Anderson said he voluntarily disclosed his travel history and lack of COVID-19 symptoms. He was then presented with a contract to voluntarily self-quarantine at home. He refused to sign the document, saying he needed to work at his office. Rapadas claims that the governor, through her counsel, agreed that this was acceptable.

"The governor's letter has been forwarded to the Attorney General. The U.S. Attorney supports the governor's efforts to meet the ongoing challenges faced by Guam. The continuity of operations in the USAO also remains a high priority. The U.S. Attorney is part of daily activities within the office. He will continue his work until further order by DOJ," the letter added.

In her letter to Barr, Leon Guerrero

Guam has allowed the CNMI to continue to send specimens for COVID-19 testing.

Torres advises CNMI residents to do their part to stay at home, avoid unnecessary travel except trips to the grocery store and picking up food and medication.

"Marianas, we need to take this seriously. Please stay home and avoid contact with our *man'amko* and our loved ones with pre-existing illnesses. They are most at risk for severe illness from the COVID-19 virus," he said.

Torres stated that this is the time to stay vigilant and to not fear or panic. "If we work together and stay informed and help each other, we can overcome this virus."

"As one Marianas, we have remained resilient in the face of the worst storms and economic downturns, and we emerged stronger because we made the necessary choice to work together. Lt. Gov. Palacios and I will continue to work with CHCC CEO Esther Muña, our health experts, our COVID-19 Task Force, and our Legislature," said Torres.

CHCC to get testing machine

Commonwealth Health Care Corp. chief operating officer Subroto Benerji said they expect to receive the ABI 7500 machine, which is needed for COVID-19 testing, in late March. It will be readily available for testing in late April.

Guam Public Health Lab is currently the only COVID-19 testing lab for Guam and the CNMI.

With the machine, it will help the CNMI get COVID-19 results faster than waiting for Guam Public Health Lab. According to Benerji, it's point-

said that Guam, just like everywhere else in the world, is working tirelessly to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 on the island.

She noted that under the Organic Act of Guam—passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the president in 1950—she, as the governor, has the obligation and the responsibility to quarantine individuals for the protection of the island against the importation and spread of disease.

Earlier this month, Leon Guerrero issued executive orders pertaining to quarantine.

She said her decision has affected the island's guests and the people greatly, but they have complied.

"Our people complied because they understood the dangers this virus poses to them and their loved ones," she said.

The governor said the people complied because they understand that the hospital and clinics are swamped and are caring for other illnesses and conditions, not just the coronavirus.

Leon Guerrero said while Guam is often forgotten in Washington, D.C., she expects that members of the U.S. Department of Justice would understand that the island is a U.S. territory where the people are subject to not only federal law, but also local law.

Leon Guerrero said she is hoping that the man President Donald J. Trump has appointed as a U.S. attorney would understand and respect that simple rule of law.

less having the test kits at this point without the machine.

CHCC is currently renovating a laboratory to a certain level, following the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment guidelines, in order to allow the machine to work properly.

"It's very critical that we do the right thing and not just plug in the equipment and let it run," said Muna. "If we do that, we're risking it and the staff could get harmed."

MAN

From Page 1

the victim and that the victim was reportedly drinking while spearfishing.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Dre Pangelinan confirmed that the victim was a local resident, but could not release any further information as of press time.

In a press release from DPS, police dispatch received a 911 call reporting a possible drowning incident at Micro Beach at about 9:15pm last Friday.

DPS patrol units, along with Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services' Search and Rescue Unit, responded and helped with the search for the victim.

14-DAY

From Page 1

This includes putting travelers in facilities designated for quarantine.

"Effective March 23, 2020, at 8am, all persons who are traveling into the CNMI, including CNMI residents, who originate from a country with an identified COVID-19 outbreak, inclusive of Guam, Hawaii, and the continental United States, shall be quarantined for a 14-consecutive day period in a manner prescribed by CHCC," states Torres' amended order.

Furthermore, travelers whose final destination is Rota or Tinian will also be subject to the same quarantine at a designated hotel and enrolled in the CHCC COVID-19 text-based illness monitoring system, subject to monitoring and follow up with CHCC based on surveillance protocols.

Pilots and flight crew who do not disembark will not be quarantined. Individuals with documented return

The testing process for COVID-19 is, first, a clinician will swab, which is called the nasopharyngeal swab, and it will be inserted through the nose, then it will be put into a testing kit, which then is put into the ABI 7500, and then wait several hours for the results.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

At about 9:56pm, SARU divers brought the victim to shore. Medics conducted cardio pulmonary resuscitation while transporting the victim to the Commonwealth Health Center. Dr. Pulst Korenburg pronounced the victim deceased at about 10:07pm.

Based on *Saipan Tribune* archives, this is the second death by drowning incident this year.

The CNMI saw its first drowning back in February, when a 53-year-old Korean male tourist drowned off Managaha.

The CNMI also saw a near-drowning incident back in Jan. 2 after a woman nearly drowned at the Grotto dive site in Marpi. However, witnesses managed to pull her out of the water and she did not have to be resuscitated.

flights within less than 14 days of arrival will be permitted to depart the CNMI; however, they will be quarantined at the designated hotel.

People entering the CNMI by vessel must also first proceed to Saipan, report to authorities and CHCC, and then serve the same 14-day quarantine period on Saipan at the designated hotel, before traveling on to Tinian, Rota, or any other CNMI island.

Those who fail to comply with this quarantine protocol will be arrested and confined.

After completing the 14-day quarantine period, CHCC will issue a document stating that the individual does not have symptoms (asymptomatic). If your final destination is Tinian or Rota, the individual must present this document to the airline or vessel when checking in for a flight or voyage to Tinian or Rota.

Individuals who are subject to this quarantine protocol and are without the CHCC document will not be allowed to board the plane or the vessel.

distribution will not only feed the CNMI's children, it will keep the economy circulating with the vendors involved.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said that, despite the many challenges that comes with distributing meals to the students in light of the COVID-19 threat, he along with the task force is adamant about ensuring that students are fed in this time of crisis.

"With the administration working with the chair and the commissioner, it was our concern on how do we give students food, how do we disseminate that? The challenge that we have now is trying to find manpower to distribute [the food], so we've been working with our task force and again, with health issues, it's different declaration than we've had with Yutu but here, we are calling our government partners to put everything aside and make sure we have the manpower to feed our children and we'll do what it takes to provide that manpower," he said.

GOVERNOR

From Page 1

quirements.

In response, Anderson said he was out of the country on personal leave and is not coming from any high-risk countries.

In a letter dated Saturday to U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr, Leon Guerrero said that Anderson apparently does not comprehend the severity of the COVID-19 issue in Guam.

Leon Guerrero said she was forced to take precious time and resources away from their response efforts last Saturday to deal with Anderson's "unacceptable behavior."

The governor said Anderson's decision to challenge her executive orders created an atmosphere of noncompliance and threatens the local government's ability to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Let me be clear, I did not bend to his title when I asked my public health nurses and Customs officers to let Mr. Anderson through," she said, adding that she did so to protect the U.S. attorney from the dangers he would face being imprisoned alongside those that his office has caused to be detained.

Leon Guerrero did not specify where the incident happened.

In his response to Leon Guerrero's



Anderson

GCA implements distance learning for K4 to Grade 12

Starting today, March 23, Grace Christian Academy will be implementing distance learning for its students in K4 to 12th grade, as part of efforts to encourage social distancing and prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

In a statement last Friday,

GCA said that Google Classroom and Canvas will be the main platforms used for distance learning. The teachers, though, will continue to incorporate Achieve3000, Smarty Ants, and other educational resources.

Also, the dates of registration

for next school year will be extended. If you have any questions, call the school at 322-3320.

GCA said it will continue to provide updates and information through the parent e-mail group and their Facebook page (Grace Christian Academy-Saipan, CNMI).

my-Saipan, CNMI).

"GCA would like to thank all their students and parents/guardians for being supportive, understanding, and patient during this unique time in which we all find ourselves. GCA began preparing weeks earlier

in the event that the schools would need to close and is ready to provide continuity of education to all the students. Last week, GCA organized a safe and effective way for parents to come to the school and pick up their child's books and

receive important information regarding the new class formats. The GCA administration would also like to thank the parents and guardians for helping to make this a very smooth process," the GCA statement said. (PR)

Businesses revamp hours

By BEA CABRERA

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Several businesses are changing operating hours, doing take-outs and are closing temporarily following Gov. Ralph Torres' executive order 2020-4 declaring a public health emergency in the CNMI. As of March 22, 2020:

OPEN AND OPERATING NORMAL HOURS

- Exxon Mobil (All Mobil service stations)
- Shell Gas Stations in San Roque and Susupe
- Star Sands Plaza - I Love Saipan in Garapan
- Kids & Joy in Garapan
- Puerto Rico Bento Restaurant in Puerto Rico. (670) 322-0007

- Bostonian Bakery along Middle Road. (670) 235-4310
- Chow Time along Middle Road. (670) 233-8463
- Fork & Spoon, Springs Plaza, Middle Road. (670) 235-5626
- Great Harvest Bread Co., Chalan Kanoa. (670) 234-2733
- Monster Pizza Pub, Garapan. (670) 233-9999

MAN'AMKO PRIORITY SHOPPING TIME

Joeten Susupe Shopping Center will dedicate an hour of exclusive shopping time for senior citizens—those ages 60 and above—from 7am to 8am.

Payless Super fresh & Truckload Store in Chalan Kanoa dedicates Tuesday and Wednesday for those ages 55 and above—from 7am to 8am

SFA cancels Mahi Mahi Derby

The Saipan Fishermen's Association wishes to announce the cancellation of the annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby, which was scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2020. The SFA is taking this measure to help contain the situation of the COVID-19 virus.

There are no cases of the coronavirus in the Marianas and by taking extra precautions such as the cancellation of these events, the SFA is hopeful that the annual derbies will take place in the near future.

"The SFA is aware of the state of public health emergency declared by our local government, as well as the impact on a global scale," said SFA president Gene Weaver.

"These are challenging times for all of us and we do recognize the importance of staying strong as a community," added SFA vice president Tony Scragg.

For more information, log on to the SFA website at sfacnmi.com or call SFA officers at 483-4363 or 483-4597. (PR)

OPEN BUT CHANGING OPERATING HOURS

Shell gas station in Puerto Rico (usually closes at midnight but now at 10pm)

Shell gas station in Dandan (starting today 6am to 12 midnight)

- Paris Croissant Bakery & Café in Garapan. (670) 233-9292
- Pho 8 Vietnamese Restaurant in Garapan. (670) 233-1388/233-1368
- Godfathers Beach Bar inside Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. (670) 234-6412
- Ristorante Italiano Capricciosa in Garapan. (670) 233-9194
- Surf Club Restaurant in Chalan Kanoa. (670) 235-1122
- Tony Roma's in Garapan. (670) 233-9193
- Tribe Marianas on Middle Road
- Paradise Dental Spa on Middle Road (670) 234-4040
- Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc. in Susupe (670) 234-6267
- 360 Revolving Restaurant Saipan located in Susupe (670) 234-3600
- Bubba Gump Saipan in Garapan (670) 233-8593
- Joeten Hafa Adai and Joeten Hafa Adai Deli in Garapan (670) 234-7596
- Joeten Dandan/Aiko's Deli in Dandan (670) 235-6018
- Joeten Susupe/Aiko's Deli in Susupe (670) 234-6446
- Joeten Aiko's Ramen in Oleai (670) 237-2176
- Joeten Kagman in Kagman (670) 256-6442
- Joeten Latte Café Saipan in Susupe, Dandan and Garapan
- R&J Wine and Liquor in Garapan.

- Herman's Modern Bakery on Airport Road and Garapan (670) 234-1726

FOOD BUSINESSES OPEN FOR TO-GO/TAKE-OUT

- Canton Restaurant in Garapan. (670) 234-7236
- Spicy Thai in Garapan. (670) 235-3000
- Bistro Marianas in Chalan Kanoa. (670) 235-1944
- Naked Fish Saipan in Garapan (670)- 235-3474
- The Shack Saipan in Oleai (670) 286-74-22
- McDonald's Saipan in Chalan Laulau and Garapan; no dine-ins, only drive-thru.
- Ina's Kitchen in Puerto Rico (670) 488-1627
- Taiwan Beef Noodle in Garapan (670) 233-2345
- Poki Yaki along Middle Road (670) 233-9254
- Salty's Bar in Garapan (670) 233-7258
- Cha Café in Garapan (Cha Bistro is closed) (670) 233-2421
- American Pizza & Grill in Garapan (670) 233-1180
- Hafa Adai Roasting Co. inside DFS T Galleria.
- Caravan of Food in Garapan

CLOSURES

- Natural Nail Spa along Middle Road temporarily closed until further notice.
- DFS T Galleria in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.


- Making Memories in San Jose temporarily closed until further notice.
- Godfather's Bar in Garapan temporarily closed until further notice.
- Hollywood Theaters/Regal Cinemas in San Jose is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Kiki's Clothing Store along Middle Road is temporarily closed until further notice
- Loco Taco in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.
- D&R Visuals in As Teo Drive is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Imperial Pacific International in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Relox Bar in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Cha Bistro in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice. The Café, however, is open.
- Cristiano's Saipan that usually does business in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe is temporarily closed until further notice.
- The Garapan Street Market (Thursday Market) at the Garapan Fishing Base is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Saturday Flea Market at the parking lot of the Marianas Business Plaza (formerly Nauru Building) is temporarily closed until further notice
- True North Bar & Grill along Beach Road in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.
- Marianas Creations along Micro Beach Road in Garapan is temporarily closed until further notice.

UTILITIES


- First Hawaiian Bank encourages customers experiencing financial hardship to reach out to their banker at 808-884-4444.
- IT&E pushed payment dues from every 15th of the month to the end of the month and no late fees will be applied. Data cap has been removed for all subscribers for the month of March.
- Docomo Pacific is removing all data caps for anyone with a postpaid mobile plan and also offering payment graces. There will be no disconnections nor late fees imposed on any customer who may be going through financial hardship.
- The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has given alternative payment options to customers. Pay bill online at www.cuc.gov.org or call toll free number 1-855-729-2282. Payments can also be made at Bank of Guam, Bank of Hawaii and Bank of Saipan.

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www.dcrm.gov.mp



Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

NOTICE

RESCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING

AGAPE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL & DORMITORY BUILDING
PERMIT APPLICATION NO. SMS-2020-X-030

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is rescheduling the public hearing for the proposed Agape Christian School and Dormitory Building along Middle Road in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Calvary International Mission is proposing to construct a three story building with a basement including an athlete area, office spaces, storage rooms, locker rooms, restrooms, utility rooms, classrooms and dormitories, 41 parking stalls with landscaping, and a generator room. The project will be situated on a privately leased property identified as Lot No. 012 D 70, an area of about 4,890 square meters.

The public hearing for this project is rescheduled for **Wednesday, April 8, 2020, at 5PM, along Middle Road, Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan, at the BECQ 2nd Floor Main Conference Room.**

Written comments can be submitted to the DCRM Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or sent by fax at 664-8315. The project files are open for review and comments during regular business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Agape Christian School and Dormitory Building.

/s/ Janice E. Castro
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

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INSTALLMENT AVAILABLE

NMI gets \$366.9K for emergency anti-COVID-19 measures

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of

the Interior has released \$366,900 in grant funds to

the CNMI to be used to buy personal protective equip-

ment such as face masks for government workers during

the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grant is part of the fiscal year 2020 Technical Assistance Program funding, which the CNMI government regularly receives from DOI every year.

"I am pleased to provide this support to CNMI Gov. [Ralph DLG] Torres as the CNMI works to implement preventive measures during this unprecedented pandemic," said Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "One advantage of funding provided through the Office of Insular Affairs is that we

can move it quickly during times of emergency and need. We are also coordinating with our federal partners to ensure that the funding we provide is complementary and not duplicative."

The grant will be made available through the Office of Insular Affairs' Technical Assistance Program. More information on other federal funding support to combat COVID-19 in the insular areas is available at <https://www.doi.gov/oia/press/interior-applauds-centers-disease-controls-support-us-territories-and-freely-associated>. (PR)

House OKs bill to build up Kagman Commercial Farm Plot program

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the world rumbles in panic over the coronavirus pandemic, one issue got significantly highlighted—that food security matters—with the recent passage of a House bill that seeks to open up the opportunity to rebuild and strengthen the agriculture sector in the CNMI, through the Kagman Commercial Farm Plot.

Authored by House vice speaker Rep. Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), House Bill 21-108 will provide the Department of Land and Natural Resources with the authority to hold and manage public lands transferred to it from the Department of Public Lands.

It will also grant authority to DLNR's Division of Agriculture to issue licenses and permits in respect to the Kagman Commercial Farm Plot Program. There are currently over 30 farm plots in Kagman.

In an earlier interview, Deleon Guerrero said the bill would allow the Division of Agriculture to collect fees for the use of the farm plots, and to provide services to farm plot owners, such as maintenance and soil cultivation, among others.

Currently, the Division of Agriculture is not allowed by virtue of the CNMI Constitution to do so. Deleon Guerrero said this bill would address that concern.

Division of Agriculture director Jack Ogumoro, speaking before the members of

the House at its session last March 13, said the legislation "would allow us to implement a very special program for our farmers and that's the Kagman Commercial Farm Plot."

"This is a program that is designed to help our farmers become farmers. We need farmers because of all these problems, including the virus, we might have a problem with our food supply, and so we need farmers," he added.

Ogumoro also raised, before the legislators, a problem with the division's current set up. "There is no Division of Agriculture that exists in our current statute. We need to change that. ...I would really appreciate your help in expediting this piece of legislation to call us what we should be called, the Division of Agriculture, and become a legitimate member of the CNMI."

Board of Parole chair Ramon B. Camacho also spoke before lawmakers to support the bill.

"Food security matters," Camacho said. "It's about time that we relinquish this thing from [the Department of] Public Lands to the Division of Agriculture so that they can create programs and entice our people to start farming."

"It's about time. ...We need to give authority to the Division of Agriculture so the division could come up with and develop programs in our community, [for] our young generation to start venturing into farming," he added.

DLNR's Division of Agri-

culture recently collaborated with the Board of Parole, the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research and Extension Education Services,

Saipan Mayor's Office, Miss Earth NMI, and Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan) to launch a community garden in Susupe, the very first in the CNMI.

Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT 1

Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

FACT 2

For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.

Older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease, are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

FACT 3

Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT 4

There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

FACT 5

You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

SCHEDULED CUC INTERRUPTIONS

Scheduled water service outage on March 27

There will be a scheduled water service interruption on Friday, March 27, 2020, from 8am to 4pm in the Gualo Rai area and a portion along Chalan Pale Arnold from the Gualo Rai traffic light intersection to the Taro Sue building. Customers in the affected area should expect restoration of water services soon after.

The purpose of the scheduled water interruption is to allow the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. contractor for the Gualo Rai Waterline Replacement Project, AIC Marianas, to connect a new 10-inch distribution main to the existing 1-million-gallon tank. As a result of the waterline connection, a more reliable water system will be provided to the community. (PR)

Scheduled power interruption on Rota

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Thursday, March 26, 2020, from 8am to 2pm. Areas affected will be Sinapalo 1, 2.3, Ginalangan, Chenchun and As Nieves area.

The purpose of the power interruption is to de-energize utility lines on Feeder 2 so that Commonwealth Utilities Corp. linemen are able to safely replace deteriorated dead-end steel pins, cross arm braces and accessories within the aforementioned affected areas.

For more information, contact the CUC Rota Office at 532-9411/4 or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

Barr urges public to report COVID-19 fraud

U.S. Attorney General William P. Barr is urging the public to report suspected fraud schemes related to COVID-19 by calling the National Center for Disaster Fraud hotline (1-866-720-5721) or by emailing the NCDF at disaster@leo.gov.

Last week, Barr directed all U.S. attorneys to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of coronavirus-related fraud schemes. In a follow-up memorandum issued March 19, Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen further directed each U.S. attorney to appoint a coronavirus fraud coordinator to serve as the legal counsel for the federal judicial district on matters relating to the coronavirus, direct the prosecution of coronavirus-related crimes, and to conduct outreach and awareness.

Some examples of these schemes include:

- Individuals and businesses selling fake cures for COVID-19 online and engaging in other forms of fraud.
- Phishing emails from

entities posing as the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Malicious websites and apps that appear to share Coronavirus-related information to gain and lock access to your devices until payment is received.

- Seeking donations fraudulently for illegitimate or non-existent charitable organizations.

- Medical providers obtaining patient information for COVID-19 testing and then using that information to fraudulently bill for other tests and procedures.

The NCDF can receive and enter complaints into a centralized system that can be accessed by all U.S. attorneys, as well as Justice Department litigating and law enforcement components to identify, investigate and prosecute fraud schemes. The NCDF coordinates complaints with 16 additional federal law enforcement agencies, as well as state attorneys general and local authorities. (PR)

CONSUMER LOANS, PERSONAL CREDIT CARDS

BOG offers blanket 3-month deferment

HAGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced Friday that all customers with personal loans and/or personal credit cards will have their payments automatically deferred. All personal loan payments will be deferred for three months, regardless of account status. All personal credit card payments will be deferred for May, June, and July, also regardless of account status.

No action will be required by the bank's customers to defer payments. However, customers with scheduled automatic deductions or payment will need to make arrangement for those payments to stop the deferral period.

CONSUMER LOANS

■ **FTMs or auto payments via a Bank of Guam account:** Customers who want to move their transfer date from their

Bank of Guam account can contact Loan Support Department or call our Familia Contact for assistance. Please note that the Familia Contact Center is open daily with limited hours. Requests can also be made via secure message in online banking or by emailing customerservice@bankofguam.com.

■ **FTMs or auto payments via all other bank accounts:** Requests to move their transfer date that pull from other bank accounts will have to be made four business days prior to the next scheduled transfer date.

■ **Payroll deductions:** Customers that have payroll deductions should contact their employer to temporarily stop payroll deductions during the deferral period.

■ **Recurring payment via online banking:** Customers

that have scheduled recurring payments through online banking will have to log into their online banking accounts and adjust their next payment date.

CREDIT CARDS

■ **Auto payments (AutoPay) made directly via gotomycard.com:** Customers that have set up auto payments through gotomycard.com will have to make an adjustment to their next payment date. Please note, any changes will have to be made before their due date.

Mortgage and commercial loan customers may reach their respective departments for any questions. Mortgage customers can email mortgagebanking@bankofguam.com;

Commercial loan customers can email commercialbanking@bankofguam.com.

"Bank of Guam has a tradition of escalating our efforts to support our community in times of their greatest need, and this deferment program is no different. We appreciate that our community is anxious about our loved ones, our jobs and our future; and we have listened to you," said Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, Bank of Guam president and chief executive Officer. "We continue to do what we can to help all of us through this time. Please continue to be responsible and do what you can to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Our branches remain open at a limited capacity, and I urge you to come in only if absolutely necessary. We are doing this blanket deferment so that we can take extra steps to ensure the safety of our employees and our community, and minimize in-person interaction. These are uncharted waters and we will get through difficult times together." (PR)

Torres announces federal assistance for COVID-19 response

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced Friday that President Donald J. Trump has approved his March 3, 2020, request for federal assistance to aid ongoing CNMI efforts to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.

As of March 13, 2020, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has officially been authorized to provide appropriate assistance and to provide emergency protective measures (Category B) not authorized under other federal statutes, including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program.

Torres also announced his ongoing efforts with the U.S. Small Business Administration to provide economic injury disaster loans for the CNMI's businesses, which have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak and the loss of tourists coming into the CNMI.

Below is the governor's full announcement on social media to the Marianas on Saturday, March 21, 2020:

"I understand that it has been a long week for all of us

"Last night, our community received some positive news in light of all that is going on in our region and around the world.

"Two specimens that were sent to Guam earlier this week for testing returned negative for COVID-19. This includes the specimen from an individual we isolated.

"While we still do not have a confirmed case of CO-

VID-19 here in the CNMI, your government through our COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Health Care Corp., through CEO Esther Muña, continues to be proactive and implement strict social distancing procedures to keep you, your families, our *man'amko*, and our loved ones with pre-existing illnesses safe.

"Since January, we have been actively conducting surveillance at our airports and screening tourists and returning residents through our health declaration form coming into the Marianas. We were the first state or territory in the United States to do this.

"When we made the request on January 29 to suspend flights from China to protect our islands from the coronavirus, we knew that was a difficult decision. It brought our economy to a standstill and hurt our government revenues, which was seeing positive collections in January. But we knew we had to do what was right to keep our islands safe, despite having to go through this economic crisis.

"On March 3, 2020, I wrote to President Donald J. Trump to inform him of our crisis in the CNMI and sought his assistance to mobilize federal resources to aid the CNMI government in our response to this pandemic.

"Earlier this week, in response to my communication, [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] has official-

ly been authorized to provide appropriate assistance and to provide emergency protective measures (Category B) not authorized under other Federal statutes, including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program.

"FEMA Region IX Administrator Robert Fenton, who has been a strong partner of ours during typhoons, directly informed me that the President's declaration covers all of our islands, Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, for COVID-19 response.

"Lt. Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios and I have already started working closely with FEMA since March 13 to access all the federal resources available to the CNMI pursuant to the presidential declaration, including my request for the mobilization of the Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT-A) to assist the CNMI in its emergency protective measures and response coordination to combat COVID-19.

"We also worked with the U.S. Small Business Administration to provide economic injury disaster loans for our affected businesses. Through the support of our businesses, the SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance approved our request, and we are now waiting for the formal declaration to begin offering assistance to all of our impacted businesses and non-profit organizations.

"Federal support at my request is well on its way, so we are not alone in this crisis. We made these requests before a confirmed positive case emerged within our region.

"Then last Sunday, upon hearing the news of three confirmed positive cases in Guam, Lt. Gov. Palacios and I did not wait. We took action. We immediately called for the closure of all government offices and non-essential government operations. We worked with the Board of Education, [Public School System], and [the Northern Marianas College] in closing down schools and our college. The next day, I officially declared a public health emergency for the CNMI.

"Effective Monday morning, March 23, all passengers from off-island, including residents, will be subject to mandatory quarantine for a minimum of 14 days. This may be an inconvenience for you, but please understand that this is to protect your family and your loved ones.

"To all of our business and travel partners, thank you for all of the support and understanding since we first addressed this virus. In the coming days, we will be making more drastic decisions for closure of restaurants and other establishments.

"This crisis is bigger than

politics and bigger than ourselves. It is a challenging time for our Commonwealth, but I know that if we all work together, help each other out, practice proper hygiene, and promote social distancing, we can beat this virus.

"We will always be *Marianas Strong*, and I will continue to provide updates, along with our COVID-19 Task Force, CHCC, and all our local and federal partners."

Torres also expressed his

appreciation to the leadership of both houses of the Legislature in assisting in securing additional federal assistance for the Marianas.

"I want to thank Senate President Victor B. Hocog, Speaker BJ T. Attao, and the leadership of both the House and Senate for their support and commitment in working with my office to secure this federal assistance from the President. Both houses are also committed to leverage

local funding for our public health emergency," said Torres. "The President and FEMA have been strong partners for the Marianas for several years now, and we look forward to working with them to strengthen our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. My administration and the Legislature's leadership will continue to work with our federal partners to secure additional funding to protect our community from COVID-19." (PR)

Temporary hours at CUC Customer Center

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s Customer Center temporary hours effective March 23 to March 27, 2020 are as follows:

■ Cashier/payments: Monday to Friday: 8am to 2pm
nCustomer service: Monday to Friday: 8am to 2pm

In an effort to slow down and stop the spread of the virus, CUC Customer Service will only be entertaining critical transactions from its customers as follow:

1. Payments and token purchases
2. Reconnections (existing connections)
3. Prepay meter applications (for online/web-based meters)
4. Termination of service(s)

CUC is also encouraging its

customer to exercise "social distancing" as recommended by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Upon entering the CUC Customer Center, customers are expected to adhere to a 6-foot distance between each other. All customers will be assisted by a CUC employee from a window. There will be no assistance provided from the customer booths for that matter.

Only 10 customers at a time will be allowed inside the CUC Customer Center or as permitted at the CUC Rota and Tinian branches to transact necessary business. Customers are asked to hand-sanitize upon enter-

ing the center. Do not arrive with other members of your family or friends that will not be transacting business with CUC. They will not be permitted inside.

You could also pay your bill at a Bank of Guam, Bank of Saipan, and Bank of Hawaii branch. However, CUC encourages you to stay at home and make your payment online by visiting CUC's website at www.cuc.gov.org or pay by phone by calling toll free 1-855-729-2282 (1-855-PAY2CUC). Partial payments are now accepted online and by phone and there are no fees to use these services at this time. A debit or credit card is required. (PR)

Social Security offices only offer phone service

All local Social Security offices is closed to the public for in-person service. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the coronavirus pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

Our secure and convenient online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the phone. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, state and local governments, and other experts to monitor COVID-19 and will let you know as soon as we can resume in-person service.

If you need help from Social Security:

■ First, use our secure and convenient online services available at www.socialsecurity.gov/onlineservices. You

can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more – from anywhere and from any of your devices. We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by phone. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.

■ If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, please check our online field office locator for specific information about how to directly contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the phone.

■ If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, we will call you to handle your appointment over the phone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, we will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. Our call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. Government phone. Please remember that our employees will not threaten you or ask for any form of payment.

■ If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, please call our National 800 Number at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Our National 800 Number has many automated service options you can use without waiting to speak with a telephone representative. A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html. (PR)

Lions Club hosts district convention via live streaming

The Lions Clubs International District 204 was still able to hold its district convention in a first-ever video conference last March 14 at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan in Garapan.

Delegates from Guam were initially supposed to come to Saipan, but decided to cancel their travel due to health and safety concerns. They still pushed through with the convention at the Hilton Guam

Resort & Spa.

The convention focused on the election of first and second vice district governor and the convention site for next year.

After the election, Saturnino "Atoy" Banting of Saipan was elected first vice district governor and Loisa Cabuhat of Guam was elected second vice district governor. The convention site in 2021 will be in Guam.

The annual health fair of the

Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 on March 29 is postponed at this time.

The Guam side is composed of 18 clubs, while Saipan has six clubs, each club is self-governing. They can have their own projects, events and fundraising but all clubs work as one as a region. There were a total of 124 delegates, Saipan had 64 and Guam had 60. (Justine Nauta)



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Notice of suspension of programs

In light of the governor's Executive Order 2020-04 (declaration of a State of Public Health Emergency and State of Significant Emergency) on March 16, 2020, as amended, that shuts down all non-essential government offices for a period two weeks and for non-essential personnel to stay home until further notice due to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, the CNMI Energy Division Office is temporarily suspending all program services for the Weatherization Assistance Program and the State Energy Program for a period of two weeks or until further notice. The Division of Energy will announce additional information and updates on program services once office operations resume and return to normal. (PR)

Court closures

Due to the health and safety concerns surrounding the threat of COVID-19 and pursuant to Supreme Court Order 2020-ADM-002-MS, all Judiciary facilities will remain closed to the public up to and including Friday,

April 3, 2020. During the closure, emergency and essential court services may continue. Visit www.cnmilaw.org to review the order. For additional information or inquiries, contact Gretchen A. Smith, Esq., Clerk of Court, CNMI Supreme Court, at (670) 236-9715, (670) 788-4363, or gretchen.smith@nmijudiciary.com or Patrick V. Diaz, Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, at (670) 235-5248, (670) 783-8417, or patrick.diaz@nmijudiciary.com. (PR)

Women's Mini Expo, Women's Summit postponed

Because of the COVID-19 problem, the CNMI Women's Association and the Women's Affairs Office would like to inform the public that the Annual Women's Mini Expo and the CNMI Women's Summit, scheduled for March 24 and March 27 respectively have been postponed until further notice. The CNMI Women's Association shall remain closed until further notice. For assistance, call 285-8975 or email cwa.fogumoro@gmail.com. (PR)

SBA offers disaster aid to CNMI small businesses

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses in the CNMI that



SOCIAL DISTANCING

No gatherings of more than 10 people? No problem. A member of the CNMI community takes advantage of this critical situation and social distancing to learn a new hobby: fishing.

JUSTINE NAUTA

CNMI to get \$367.76K share of CDC funding

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The CNMI has been allocated a total of \$369,765.90 in funding under the newly signed 2020 Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, to help fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the new law, an additional \$8.3 billion has been made available to support state and local jurisdictions to respond to COVID-19. This includes an additional \$2.7 million in support to the insular areas as part of the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-123), signed by President Trump on March 6, 2020, and announced by the U.S. Department of Health Services on March 11.

The Act includes statutory language prescribing the exact formula for disbursing funding under the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program. The following amounts have been made available to the territories and Freely Associated States to support their response to COVID-19: American Samoa (\$370,246.50); Guam (\$479,431.80); Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (\$369,765.90); U.S. Virgin Islands (\$419,100.30); Republic of the Marshall Islands (\$367,754.40); Federated States of Micronesia (\$420,402.60); Republic of Palau (\$336,793.50).

Support to the U.S. insular areas is coordinated through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support in Atlanta, Georgia. For many years,

» \$2.7 million for insular areas included in 2020 Supplemental Coronavirus Act

the CDC has engaged with the U.S. insular areas to develop and continuously refine emergency response plans, including response plans for pandemic influenza, through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program. The PHEP program includes cooperative agreement funding and technical assistance for the U.S. territories and FAS.

The U.S. Department of the Interior has applauded CDC for their ongoing technical assistance and financial support to the U.S. territories and the FAS during the current coronavirus pandemic.

"Health systems and infrastructure are especially vulnerable in the island areas, and as of today, both the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam have reported positive cases of COVID-19," said Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "The CDC has been a long-time partner to the U.S. territories and the Freely Associated States and we appreciate the ongoing support and expertise that they continue to provide, especially during this unprecedented time. My team and I at the Office of Insular Affairs are in touch with the governors of each of the territories and are evaluating ways to provide supplemental support and assistance as needed."

Currently, the CDC is col-

laborating with others to adapt existing response plans for the current COVID-19 threat. The CDC is supporting each jurisdiction in applying their plans and facilitating regular regional calls for the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands to provide a forum for them to share information.

The CDC also provides technical assistance and develops additional funding options to support regional mechanisms for infectious disease response such as the laboratory specimen shipment mechanism that allows public health laboratories in Hawaii and Guam to provide testing services for the USAPI.

The CDC provides direct support to the islands' COVID-19 response through their emergency operations center in Atlanta, and through staff assigned in Guam, Honolulu, and Puerto Rico.

For more information on CDC's Center for State, Tribal, Local and Territorial Support, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/about-cstlts/index.html>

In related efforts, President Trump declared on March 13, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. More on this announcement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency may be found at: <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/03/13/covid-19-emergency-declaration>. (PR)

are suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the coronavirus, COVID-19, SBA administrator Jovita Carranza announced Friday.

SBA acted under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, to declare a disaster following a request received from Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres on March 19, 2020.

The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in the entire Commonwealth.

"SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible to assist CNMI small businesses with federal disaster loans. We will be swift in our efforts to help these small businesses recover from the financial impacts of the coronavirus," said Carranza.

SBA customer service representatives will be available to answer questions about SBA's Economic Injury Di-

saster Loan program and explain the application process.

"Small businesses, private non-profit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives and small aquaculture enterprises that have been financially impacted as a direct result of the coronavirus since Jan. 31, 2020, may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses, which could have been met had the disaster not occurred," said Carranza.

"These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. Disaster loans can provide vital economic assistance to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing," Carranza added.

Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the coronavirus. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses.

The interest rate for private non-profit organizations is 2.75%. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Dec. 21, 2020. (PR)

Interior redirects \$2.2M to Guam and Rota

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Department of the Interior has redirected prior year grant funding amounting to \$2,216,370 for renovations at the Guam Adult Correctional Facility and to purchase a rock crusher for the Rota quarry in the CNMI.

"We have worked directly with both governors' offices in Guam and the CNMI and redirected these funds as requested," said Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech.

"We are pleased to work with the Guam and CNMI leadership to readjust funding according to their identified needs and priorities."

Funds will be redirected as follows: ■ \$2,000,000 in Capital Improvement Program

funding will be used to renovate and update systems at the Guam Department of Corrections Adult Correction Facility, including the fire alarm and sprinkler systems, HVAC systems, security gates, and locking mechanisms through-

out the facility.

■ \$216,370 in Maintenance Assistance Program funding will be used to purchase a rock crusher for the Rota quarry. The absence of a functioning quarry in Rota for the last five years has hindered infrastructure development. Businesses and private citizens will soon be able to purchase gravel, sand, and other materials necessary for construction and development projects on the island. The funds had been previously been identified to purchase a seaport pedestal crane. (PR)

HUD suspends foreclosures, evictions for next 60 days

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, in consultation with the Trump administration and the Coronavirus Task Force, has authorized the Federal Housing Administration to implement an immediate foreclosure and eviction moratorium for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days.

These moratoriums are part of the continued effort by President Donald J. Trump to address impacts to the financial wellbeing of America's individuals, families, and businesses caused by coronavirus, or COVID-19.

"Today's actions [March 18, 2020] will allow households who have an FHA-insured mortgage to meet the challenges of COVID-19

without fear of losing their homes, and help steady market concerns," said Carson. "The health and safety of the American people is of the utmost importance to the department, and the halting of all foreclosure actions and evictions for the next 60 days will provide homeowners with some peace of mind during these trying times."

The guidance applies to homeowners with FHA-insured Title II Single Family forward and Home Equity Conversion (reverse) mortgages, and directs mortgage servicers to:

■ Halt all new foreclosure actions and suspend all foreclosure actions currently in process; and

■ Cease all evictions of persons from FHA-insured single-family properties.

"This is an uncertain time

for many Americans, particularly those who could experience a loss of income. As such, we want to provide FHA borrower households with some immediate relief given the current circumstances," said Federal Housing Commissioner Brian Montgomery. "Our actions today make it clear where the priority needs to be."

FHA continues to encourage servicers to offer its suite of loss mitigation options to distressed borrowers—including those that could be impacted by the coronavirus—to help prevent them from going into foreclosure. These include short and long-term forbearance options, mortgage modifications, and other mortgage payment relief options available based on the borrower's individual circumstances. (PR)

No TRO yet in PSS' lawsuit against Torres and Atalig

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At this time, the Superior Court has not granted a temporary restraining order in connection with the lawsuit filed by the Public School System and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada against Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Finance Secretary David Atalig

» Case re-assigned to Camacho

over the annual PSS budget.

Instead, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho on Thursday set a status conference for April 14 at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe. Camacho ordered the parties to come prepared to discuss briefing deadlines and hearing dates.

Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja re-assigned the case to Camacho on Thursday after Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio recused herself from handling the case, saying she is close family friends with the teacher representative on the Board of Education.

PSS and Ada are suing Torres and Atalig to guarantee for PSS an annual budget of not less than 25% of the Commonwealth's general revenue. Ada and PSS, through counsel

Tiberius Mocanu, allege that Torres and Atalig are in violation of the NMI Constitution. Mocanu said that Public Law 21-08, which set the Commonwealth government's

budget for fiscal year 2020, allocated \$37.72 million to PSS, which is approximately 16% of the budget. He said Torres and Atalig are in violation of the NMI Constitution because

every allotment and disbursement made pursuant to P.L. 21-08 is unconstitutional.

PSS and Ada asked the court to declare P.L. 21-08 unconstitutional. They asked the

court to issue a preliminary and permanent injunction to stop Torres and Atalig from issuing any payments or disbursements that do not comply with the Constitution.

Prosecutor says he allowed Park's call to Atalig's proposed witness

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The lead prosecutor in the corruption case against Rota Mayor M. Atalig and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, in federal court has stated that he agreed with Federal Bureau of Investigation special agent Haejun Park's proposal to call the defense's proposed expert witness.

In his declaration filed in court, assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley said the purpose of Park's call was to ascertain information that had not been provided in the defense's last-minute motion to add Dr. Gregory Vecchi as a witness.

Vecchi is a former special agent with the Office of the

Inspector General.

O'Malley's declaration was filed in support of the U.S. government's opposition to the Ataligs' motion to sanction Park for misconduct.

O'Malley said the purpose of the call was specifically to determine whether Vecchi had or had not been formally retained and whether he had already performed work for the Ataligs.

"The purpose of the call was not to dissuade Dr. Vecchi from engaging with the defense, but the information sought was to inform my approach to the hearing on the matter," he said.

At that time, the prosecutor said, the hearing was less than a day and half away, and was to start an hour before jury selection began.

O'Malley said he did not hear much of the call, as Park used his mobile phone and had stepped to the corner of the room, while he (O'Malley) continued working with Office of the Public Auditor investigator Travis Hurst.

He said did hear Park identify himself as the investigating agent involved in the case, after

he (Park) and Vecchi had briefly spoken of their time together in Iraq, and about the two's mutual cigar appreciation.

O'Malley said that Park told him after the call that Vecchi had told him he had not been formally hired, knew very little about the matter, and was not sure what was expected of him.

O'Malley said that, according to Park when told that the trial was set to start in two days, Vecchi stated in effect that there was no way he (Vecchi) would be able to perform his work that quickly.

The prosecutor said he then asked whether Park thought Vecchi—based on their shared experience—would say that Park's conduct in Iraq was professional. He said Park replied that he believed Vecchi would say that he (Park) was in fact "a professional."

O'Malley said the purpose of him informing the defense was not to dissuade them from employing Vecchi as an expert.

Indeed, O'Malley said, he had briefly considered dropping his objection to Vecchi's testimony because he felt (at

least at the time) that it was likely he would testify favorably about his prior work experience with Park.

However, O'Malley said, ultimately he decided to maintain his objection because he believes it would be a waste of taxpayer money, would likely cause even more delays in the trial, and would produce only irrelevant information and/or confuse the jury.

Park also issued a declaration in support of the U.S. government's opposition to the Ataligs' motion to impose sanctions. He denied that he made statements to dissuade Vecchi from testifying on behalf of the Ataligs' defense.

Park also stated he made no reference as to the strength of the U.S. government's case against Efraim Atalig.

In their motion to impose sanctions, Efraim Atalig and Evelyn Atalig, through their counsels, David G. Banes and Steven P. Pixley, accused Park of witness tampering.

The Ataligs filed the joint motion to add Vecchi as an expert witness last March 6. Banes and Pixley said they intend to call Vecchi as a witness

regarding interviewing techniques and reporting involved in a criminal investigation.

Banes and Pixley said that, in Park's call to Vecchi, Park gave Vecchi the impression that the prosecution has a strong case and made negative remarks about the defense investigator, who is a former FBI special agent.

The charges against Efraim and Evelyn Atalig involve at least eight trips taken by the couple at different times in 2018 to Guam, Palau, the U.S. mainland, South Korea, and Saipan.

The Ataligs are being charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft from program receiving federal funds, wire fraud, and theft from program receiving federal funds. Both are also charged separately with false statement.

Last Monday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered the postponement of the jury trial due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Manglona vacated the jury trial scheduled last Wednesday and set a status conference for April 29 at 1:30pm.

Income tax filing deadline is moved to July 15 from April 15

WASHINGTON (AP)—Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin says the Trump administration has decided to push the income tax filing date to July 15 from April 15.

Mnuchin announced the decision in a tweet Friday saying that at President Donald Trump's direction "we are moving Tax Day from April

15 to July 15. All taxpayers and businesses will have this additional time to file and make payments without interest or penalties."

The administration had announced earlier in the week that it would delay the payments, a move that Mnuchin said would leave \$300 billion in the economy at a critical time.

Hawaii to quarantine all arrivals for 14 days

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii's governor has instituted a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine starting Thursday of all people traveling to the state as part of efforts to fight the spread of coronavirus. The order applies to returning residents as well as visitors. It applies to all arrivals at Hawaii airports from the continental U.S. and international destinations and extends to other private and commercial aircraft.

"With the majority of Hawai'i's COVID-19 cases linked to travel, it is critical that we further mitigate the spread of the virus by both residents and visitors who are coming from out-of-state," Gov. David Ige said in a statement. "This plan was developed in collaboration with our county mayors and Hawai'i's business, community and visitor industry leaders."

Returning residents must quarantine themselves at home, the governor's office said. Visitors must quarantine themselves in their hotel room or rented lodging.

People under quarantine

may only leave their homes for medical emergencies or to seek medical care, the governor's office said. They cannot visit public spaces such as pools, fitness centers or restaurants.

Failure to follow the order is a misdemeanor and punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000, or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both, the governor's office said.

"These actions are extreme, but they will help flatten the curve and lay the groundwork for a quicker recovery. We need everyone to comply with these quarantine orders to help protect Hawai'i's residents," Ige said.

The state announced 11 new cases of people with coronavirus, bringing Hawaii's total to 48, according to Hawaii News Now. Three of them are hospitalized.

The U.S. Army announced a soldier with the 25th Infantry Battalion based in Hawaii tested positive for coronavirus, the first case linked to the Army community in the state. Hawaii News Now reported. The soldier is in isolation.

Army Corps, CNMI ink accord for Beach Road study

By **DINO W. BUCHANAN**
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS-HONOLULU DISTRICT

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii—The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers signed a feasibility cost-share agreement with CNMI government last March 9 to authorize civil works studies of Beach Road, one of the CNMI's main public thoroughfare and only coastal highway on Saipan, in order to determine ways to protect it from future floods.

The three-year, \$3-million study is 100% federally funded and will be managed by Honolulu District's civil works branch.

The studies will be funded under Public Law 116-20, the Additional Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Relief Act, 2019, signed into law June 6, 2019.

Honolulu District commander Lt. Col. Kathryn Sanborn and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signed the agreement on Saipan.

"This study provides a unique opportunity for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help address the risks of coastal flooding in a critical



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu District commander Lt. Col. Kathryn Sanborn and Saipan Gov. Ralph DLG Torres sign the Feasibility Cost-Share Agreement for the Saipan Beach Road Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Study. The \$3 million study will be managed by Honolulu District's civil and public works branch, utilizing funding provided in Public Law 116-20, the Additional Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Relief Act, 2019, signed into law June 6, 2019.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS-HONOLULU DISTRICT

area on the island of Saipan," said Mike Wyatt, Honolulu District's Chief, Civil & Public Works branch. "Roads, residences and businesses are all affected by major storm events, and our goal is to fully evaluate options to protect this area for the future."

The shoreline in the project area is in close proximity to the seaward traffic lane of Beach Road. During Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018, elevated water levels allowed large waves to

propagate across Saipan Lagoon across the road, resulting in prolonged road closure for debris removal and road repair, flood inundation damage to surrounding businesses and private properties, and undermining of a pedestrian path.

The Army Corps study will identify coastal flood hazards and potential mitigation measures for critical areas within a two-mile stretch of shoreline from the 13 Fishermen's Memorial to the Chalan Monsi-

gnor Guerrero Road (the road going up the Northern Marianas College).

The analysis will also formulate potential alternative plans that provide Coastal Storm Damage Reduction benefits and document the results in a decision document that will serve as the basis for project construction authorization. The Army Corps civil works team started initial analysis for the Saipan Beach Road study in early March.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 57

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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EDITORIAL

Stop the scammers: COVID-19 fears being exploited

The COVID-19 coronavirus crisis has brought out the compassion and good-heartedness of many Americans. Unfortunately, there is no crisis that scammers will not seek to exploit.

It certainly didn't take long for con artists to hatch a litany of schemes designed to prey on people's fears in a time of emergency.

In Toledo Ohio, police have warned residents about people going door to door claiming to be selling COVID-19 test kits or asking for advance payment for testing. Tests for the virus can be ordered only through a doctor's office and no one with a reputable product is selling them door to door.

The Pennsylvania State Police have warned residents to watch out for fake social media posts promoting COVID-19 treatments or phony charities soliciting donations.

Scams run the gamut, sometimes relying on robocalls or phishing emails, and sometimes hawking bogus products with fake claims.

The Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration have already warned seven companies for falsely advertising products that they claim can treat or cure COVID-19. Among them have been "The Jim Bakker Show," on which the host, who many remember was convicted of fraud back in the 1980s, promised his "Silver Solution" could clear the virus from the human immune system.

Also targeted by authorities has been notorious conspiracy theorist and Infowars host Alex Jones, who has claimed the toothpaste, dietary supplements and lotions that he sells can effectively treat coronavirus.

Fear and uncertainty make us vulnerable to scam artists. Cool heads and healthy skepticism will help keep us safe.

And while consumers put their guards up, authorities must ramp up efforts to do more of what state and federal officials have done in these cases already. The U.S. attorney general has appointed a COVID-19 fraud coordinator to organize investigations into these frauds, which is a good start.

The public must be protected from bogus claims and cons while we deal with this public health crisis.

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Steps taken to address COVID-19 issues

Dear Congressman Gregorio C. Sablan: Thank you for your letter dated March 16, 2020 suggesting that I request the President to make a disaster declaration for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

However, I write to inform you that on March 3, 2020, I wrote to President Trump to inform him of the impending crisis in the CNMI that is being driven by the dramatic effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and sought his assistance to mobilize federal resources to aid the CNMI government in its response to this pandemic.

On March 13, 2020, in response to my communication and pursuant to the Nationwide Emergency Declaration issued by the President, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency was authorized to provide appropriate assistance for required emergency measures, authorized under Title V of the Stafford Act, to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in the designated areas. Specifically, FEMA has been authorized to provide emergency protective measures (Category B) not authorized under other federal statutes, including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program at 75% federal funding.

By way of the presidential declaration, FEMA Region IX administrator Robert Fenton was directed to inform me that the President's declaration covers all areas in the CNMI affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that we have already started working closely with FEMA since March 13 to access all the federal resources available to the CNMI pursuant to the Presidential declaration, including my request for the mobilization of the Incident Management Action Team (IMAT-A) to assist the CNMI in its emergency protective measures and response coordination to combat COVID-19.

Now, I would like to address your communication dated March 18, 2020 suggesting that I request Economic Injury Disaster Loan Declarations from the U.S. Small Business Administration as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that the President signed into law on March 6.

Please note that on March 13, I wrote to SBA administrator Jovita Carranza and requested her assistance to make EIDL loans available to small businesses and non-profit organizations in the CNMI. In response to my request to Ms. Carranza, SBA's Office

By **RALPH DLG TORRES**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ralph DLG. Torres is the 9th governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the youngest governor in the United States.



of Disaster Assistance has been working in coordination with my chief of staff to reach out to our business community to fulfill the eligibility requirement of submitting EIDL worksheets from small businesses and non-profit organizations.

In fact, I am pleased to inform you that my office has already engaged our business community through organizations such as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corporation. Affected businesses are now completing the required worksheets and, upon submission to my office, these worksheets will be submitted to SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance for review and approval.

I am looking forward to this much needed access to disaster loan assistance to be made available to our small businesses and non-profit organizations. Whole-of-government efforts being put forward by the Trump Administration in this time of great need will help fragile economies like ours minimize economic disruption as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is undoubtedly a challenging time for our Commonwealth. However, I am confident in our collective ability to overcome this challenge and ensure that the delivery of essential public services will continue to be met for the benefit of the people of the Commonwealth. With our brothers and sisters in Guam already experiencing the impact of this global pandemic, the full effort of this government has been placed on the safety and health of our people, especially those most vulnerable to this disease.

As we continue our preemptive measures to strengthen our healthcare system, please be aware that recommendations of the CNMI government as to the economic and fiscal needs in the aftermath of COVID-19's deep impact to our economy are forthcoming.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter from House minority to governor

Dear Gov. Ralph DLG Torres: We join our U.S. Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan in urging you to request, as soon as possible, federal declarations of a Major Disaster and an Economic Injury Disaster for the Northern Mariana Islands.

As we are all acutely aware, our Commonwealth is facing a public health emergency and economic catastrophe of unprecedented proportions as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Your recent declaration of a public health emergency in the Commonwealth, and President Donald Trump's declaration of a national public health emergency, have certainly helped to free up resources necessary to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We commend you for acting quickly to declare the emergency even without a confirmed COVID-19 case in the Commonwealth, especially given the limited number of test kits nationwide and in our region.

Significantly greater resources would be available, however, under a federally declared major disaster, including a wide range of programs that are not available under a state of emergency. Disaster programs include financial aid for individual households, public assistance for state and local governments and nonprofit organizations, food assistance, unemployment benefits, small business relief, legal services, crisis counseling, and hazard mitigation to prevent long-term risk to life and property.

As you know, a federal declaration of a major disaster is initiated with a gubernatorial request to the President. Indeed, in a letter to federal agency heads on March 13, President Trump indicated that he would be inclined to approve gubernatorial requests for a major disaster declaration under the Stafford Act, in connection with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, Mr. Trump wrote: "After careful consideration, I believe that the disaster is of such severity and magnitude nationwide that requests for a declaration of a major disaster as set forth in section 401(a) of the Stafford Act may be appropriate.

"I encourage all governors and tribal leaders to consider requesting federal assistance under this provision of the Stafford Act, pursuant to the statutory criteria. I stand ready to expeditiously consider any such request."

Governor, please make that request to the President for a major disaster declaration.

Second, we understand that a gubernatorial request for a federal declaration of economic injury related to COVID-19 is required to make low-interest Economic Injury Disaster Loans available to businesses and nonprofit organizations in the Commonwealth. These loans were provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Appropriations Act,

which was signed into law on March 6. A gubernatorial request for an economic injury declaration related to COVID-19 must include certification that at least five small businesses in the community have suffered substantial economic injury.

Governor, as you know, numerous businesses in the Commonwealth have suffered substantial economic injury as a result of COVID-19. The coronavirus has directly contributed to the near-total collapse of our primary industry: tourism. Flights from all of our major tourism markets have been cancelled or suspended, hotel occupancy has dropped to single digits, employees across the private and nonprofit sectors have suffered layoffs or had their work hours reduced, and numerous businesses have shut down or are on the brink of closure.

Governor, please make that request to SBA for an economic injury declaration.

Finally, we recognize that our Commonwealth is in a complex and rapidly evolving crisis situation. We applaud the measures you have enacted thus far to protect public health and safety, including your directives ordering more rigorous screening and monitoring protocols for incoming travelers, banning large public gatherings, urging social distancing, and granting broad authority to the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. and other agencies to respond to the COVID-19 threat.

A number of critical issues affecting our most vulnerable residents and businesses have come to our attention since your declaration of a public health emergency, that we believe warrant further amendments or additions to your executive orders. We offer the following recommendations:

1. Prohibit any disconnections of critical utilities (including power, water, wastewater, telecommunications, and internet) for nonpayment during the state of emergency;
2. Prohibit any evictions of residential or commercial tenants, including any late fees or penalties, during the state of emergency;
3. Prohibit any foreclosures on residential or commercial properties, including any late fees or penalties, during the state of emergency;
4. Extend the deadlines for tax filings, including individual, business gross, and corporate income taxes, and waive any late fees or penalties during the state of emergency;
5. Relax restrictions on the use of the government's sick leave bank during the state of emergency to allow government employees to self-quarantine, to seek COVID-19 care, to care for a family member with a COVID-19 diagnosis, or to care for a child whose school or daycare has closed as a result of COVID-19 concerns;
6. Direct the heads of all government agencies and depart-

ments to provide hygiene supplies, including sanitizers, soap, water, and facemasks; ensure regular cleaning and disinfecting of all facilities, and especially "high-touch" surfaces; implement rigorous social distancing protocols and allow for virtual meetings; and allow the maximum number of employees to work remotely from home, adjust schedules, and alternate shifts as necessary, while ensuring the continued delivery of essential public services; and

7. Implement a Commonwealth-wide lockdown on social gatherings of any size in any public venue for recreation, food and beverage service (other than takeout and delivery), fitness, and similar activities for at least two weeks.

Finally, Governor, we recognize the need to work together, regardless of party lines, to address the deep fiscal challenges afflicting our government. One way to facilitate this spirit of cooperation is to ensure transparency and sharing of information. To that end we urge that you provide all the members of the Legislature with the weekly fiscal status reports that you have instructed the Secretary of Finance and the Office of Management and Budget to submit pursuant to Directive 13 of Amended Executive Order 2020-04. The better informed we are in the Legislature, the more supportive we can be of your administration's endeavors to stabilize and strengthen our government's fiscal health and maintain the delivery of public services.

We also urge you to include all members of the Legislature in the effort to identify solutions to the difficult challenges we face. We stand ready to work with your administration and with our colleagues in the Legislature on bipartisan initiatives to provide relief and protections to the people we serve as effectively and as soon as possible, and to pave the way for a more resilient community and economy in the long run. These efforts may include, for example, a Commonwealth-wide unemployment insurance program, paid family leave, universal basic healthcare, and sensible and equitable tax reform.

We believe that in every crisis there is an opportunity—to improve, to lift up, to empower, to collaborate, to heal and come back stronger. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us for dialogue. We are committed to working together to help our community get through this crisis and back on its feet.

Rep. Ed Propst, Precinct 1
Rep. Christina Sablan, Precinct 2
Rep. Edmund Villagomez, Precinct 3
Rep. Sheila Babauta, Precinct 4
Rep. Richard Lizama, Precinct 5
Rep. Donald Manglona, Precinct 7

More transparency, please!

Dear Guam Gov. Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero: Now that this global pandemic has reached our shores, with 14 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of last night, one thing is certain, the public needs more answers. As an elected official, just as yourself, we have a responsibility to our constituency. Over the last few days I have been bombarded with island residents seeking more details on these cases and other issues related to the coronavirus. Being in the health care industry prior to my role as a senator, I recognize privacy laws. While we don't expect our government to release any names or pertinent information of the patients, we expect to at least provide information such as the possible whereabouts of these individuals so that island residents can take additional precautionary measures with their families. That is not asking for too much.

The island is in a state of panic, and a lot of this has to do with the lack of information being circulated by the government. It was unfortunate that through third party information, the community learned last night that several patients who were diagnosed with the virus were sent home for isolation

versus being placed at the designated isolation center at the Skilled Nursing Facility in Barrigada Heights. While there is probably a medical reason that may justify this decision, from the perspective of the community, we have added a greater level of exposure to not only the family members of this individual, but also those whom they may be in contact with. But of course, with transparency and additional information, we would have a better understanding and details of this policy, hence provide island residents an assurance that safety is paramount.

If we are able to provide the potential whereabouts of patients, even if it is vague, I can assure you that the number of home, self-quarantined cases will drastically increase, hence it would help reduce the risk of exposure. Information was provided on the flight number and arrival dates of the first few cases, but the details ended shortly after. I am certain that many of those who were on those flights took the initiative to self-quarantine or sought a test in the event that they had symptoms. But what about providing the flight information for the other

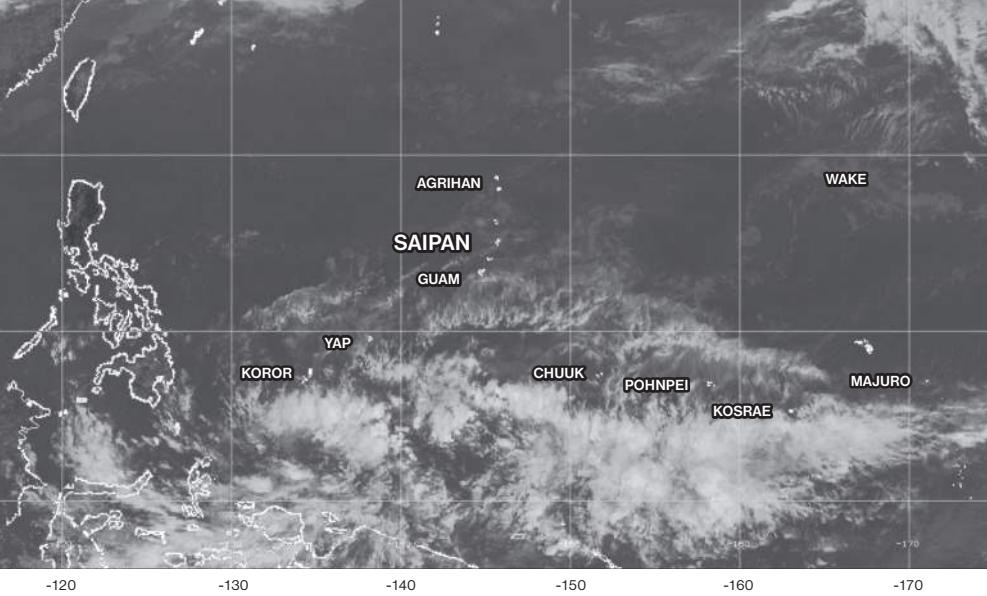
patients who traveled to provide fellow passengers a similar opportunity. The more details provided to the community without impacting privacy laws, should help reduce the chaos in the community, and now more than ever, that is needed. Whether it is about advising on when the next kits or additional ventilators will arrive on island or a health status update of the medical staff at the Guam Memorial Hospital exposed to the fiasco this past week, our people need answers.

We are facing tumultuous times, and I am optimistic in the resiliency of our community, and that we will certainly rebound from this crisis. But in the meantime, we must weather this storm together, and in order to reduce our community's fears, concerns, and paranoia, our government must be more transparent, which means providing our residents as much information as possible on what is going on and what progress has been made. Once again, that is not asking for too much.

Sen. James "Jim" C. Moylan
 35th Guam Legislature

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	
88°	75°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°	87°	76°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:05 AM, SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Partly sunny skies are expected today as mostly mid and high clouds north of a weak shear line remain across the region. This should give way to partly cloudy skies by this evening. Models indicate a fairly dry pattern remaining over the region through the week, with Monday night through Wednesday night being the driest days. Lower shower coverage to slight chance of light showers for this period. Moderate to fresh trade winds today will subside to gentle to moderate by tonight, then become moderate to fresh again around midweek.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	86° / 75°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	66° / 57°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	70° / 46°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	77° / 72°	
Honolulu	Windy	78° / 70°	
London	Mostly Sunny	50° / 37°	
Los Angeles	Showers	64° / 54°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	66° / 52°	
Miami	Sunny	81° / 72°	
New York	Mixed	45° / 40°	
Osaka	Sunny	59° / 39°	
Paris	Mostly Sunny	54° / 39°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	61° / 48°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61° / 39°	
Salem	Showers	71° / 55°	
San Francisco	Showers	57° / 47°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	64° / 43°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	59° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Showers	47° / 40°	

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PAPA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
1:23 AM	LOW TIDE		0.12
7:50 AM	HIGH TIDE		1.71
1:52 PM	LOW TIDE		0.71
7:17 PM	HIGH TIDE		1.70

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Tuesday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM
Wednesday	6:17 AM	6:28 PM
Thursday	6:16 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:16 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:39 AM	5:39 PM	-
Tuesday	6:15 AM	6:25 PM	-
Wednesday	6:50 AM	7:11 PM	-
Thursday	7:26 AM	7:57 PM	-
Friday	8:01 AM	8:45 PM	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of \$180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 22, 2020

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	1, 4, 6, 7	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	1, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY816	4:35pm	7:30pm	Daily up to Mar 25 only	SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily up to Mar 25 only
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 6, 7 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	3, 6, 7 via GUM

OTHER FLIGHTS SUSPENDED

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

Business

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

PHO 8 Vietnamese Restaurant is here for you

PHO 8 Vietnamese Restaurant located at the ground floor of Micro Beach Hotel in Garapan has been in operation since 2016. Through economic high and lows, PHO 8 which offers authentic Vietnamese food has never ceased to serve the community—nourishing with their pho soup noodles and other dishes which include rice, meat, sea-

food, and vegetables.

Vietnamese food is among the favorite Asian dishes in the world and remains relatively inexpensive. It calms and soothes one's appetite while getting a full meal in one dish because of the mixture of meat, seafood, vegetables, and rice or noodles in one bowl.

PHO 8 is considered the first



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
House specialty Vietnamese beef soup or pho served daily in PHO 8 Vietnamese Restaurant located in Garapan.

and only Vietnamese restaurant in the CNMI. Owner Ta Bun Kuy, who is originally from Vietnam, is simply happy to share the food he grew up with.

"Our specialties are Vietnamese beef soup (pho), Vietnamese drip iced coffee, Vietnamese fried spring roll with vermicelli and vegetables, and fresh Vietnamese spring rolls with pork and shrimp or with vermicelli," he said.

"We also have fried pork spring rolls which tastes better with the secret ingredients that we use for the sauce because if the mixture of the sauce is not good, you will not enjoy eating Vietnamese dish," he added.

According to Ta, PHO 8 is currently running special promotions that would suit the

budget of every individual in the CNMI. "The regular price of our Vietnamese beef noodle soup (pho) is \$14, but now it is half the price and down to \$7, Vietnamese iced coffee regular \$4.95, price now is \$2.95," he said.

"Aside from Vietnamese food, we also serve other dishes. Our Chamorro menu is 50% off and the other menu choices that includes American, Chinese, and Filipino are 20% off. We are currently in 24-hour operations, but under the current situation, it may change from 7am to 11pm... we are open and also welcome take-out orders," he added.

As always, PHO 8 management and staff adjust to the changing times. "We remain

to be physically fit and practice proper hygiene to better serve every customer... we hope that the community continues to support local business to sustain economy," Ta said.

"We ask the community to be mindful of their safety as well by not panicking and observe washing hands regularly... just be patient, control yourself until the end of the month, and hopefully everything will go back to normal," Ta added.

For orders, reservation, or for more information, contact



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Ice-cold Vietnamese iced coffee is a staple partner of all Vietnamese dishes.

PHO 8 at (670) 233-1388/233-1368, go to their Facebook page PHO 8 Vietnamese Restaurant, or email: micprt@gmail.com.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
PHO 8 Vietnamese Restaurant is located at the ground floor of Micro Beach Hotel in Garapan.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Top-level negotiations between Congress and the White House are pushing toward resolution on a ballooning \$1 trillion-plus economic rescue package, as President Donald Trump urged a deal to steady a nation shuttered by the coronavirus pandemic.

With a population on edge and financial markets teetering, all sides indicated late Saturday that a deal is within reach. At issue is how best to keep paychecks flowing for millions of workers abruptly sidelined by the crisis.

Talks also narrowed on a so-called Marshall Plan for hospitals as well as industry loans to airlines and others all but grounded by the virus outbreak and national shutdown. The post-World War II Mar-

McConnell: 'Very close' on rescue package topping \$1T

shall Plan helped to rebuild Western Europe.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced late Saturday all sides were "very close" to a bipartisan resolution.

McConnell instructed committee chairmen to assemble draft legislation. Officials put the price tag at nearly \$1.4 trillion and said that with other measures from the Federal Reserve it could pump \$2 trillion into the U.S. economy.

"We are poised to deliver the significant relief that Americans need with the speed that this crisis demands," McConnell said.

Talks will resume Sunday morning when the top four congressional leaders of

both parties are set to confer privately at the Capitol with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in hopes of striking a final accord.

A spokesman for Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said there is "not yet an agreement." Spokesman Justin Goodman said Democrats look forward to reading the draft and further negotiations.

"Everybody's working hard and they want to get to a solution that's the right solution, I think we're very close," Trump said at Saturday's briefing, striking a confident tone about the nation's ability to defeat the pandemic soon.

On Capitol Hill, the Senate convened the rare weekend session as negotiators raced

to complete the package. The Senate's goal is to hold an initial vote Sunday and win Senate passage on Monday.

The urgency to act is mounting, as jobless claims skyrocket, businesses shutter and the financial markets are set to re-open Monday eager for signs that Washington can soften the blow of the healthcare crisis and what experts say is a looming recession.

Trump has largely stayed out of the details, but said Saturday that he would be lobbying the lead negotiators.

On one topic, Trump appears to be agreeing with Democrats as Washington tries to steer clear of the politically toxic bailouts from the

last economic crises.

Trump expressed a clear distaste for any industry, including the airlines, that would use federal assistance to buy back its own stock in an effort to increase profits. Banning stock buy-backs is one of Democrats' top business priorities in the emerging package.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and other top White House officials were on Capitol Hill for a second day of nonstop negotiations. But no announcement was expected.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has been in talks with Mnuchin, returned to Washington on Saturday and was scheduled to join Sunday's meeting.

Negotiations are focused

on providing direct relief to Americans, with one-time checks of \$1,200, as well as ongoing payroll support and enhanced unemployment benefits for the newly out of work.

Talks are also focused on loans to airlines and other industries blindsided by the crisis, as well as possible aid to the states and billions for hospitals and healthcare providers on the front lines of the outbreak.

The emerging package builds on a GOP proposal but Democrats push for add-ons, including food security aid, small business loans and other measures for workers.

"We're making very good progress," Schumer said late Saturday. "We're going to continue working though the night."

Nation

38 positive for coronavirus in NYC jails, including Rikers

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—New York City was hit by the nation's largest coronavirus jail outbreak to date this week, with at least 38 people testing positive at the notorious Rikers Island complex and nearby facilities — more than half of them incarcerated men, the board that oversees the city's jail system said Saturday.

Another inmate, meanwhile, became the first in the country to test positive in a federal jail.

In a letter to New York's criminal justice leaders, Board of Correction interim chairwoman Jacqueline Sherman described a jail system in crisis.

She said in the last week, board members learned that 12 Department of Correction employees, five Correctional Health Services employees, and 21 people in custody at Rikers and city jails had tested positive for the coronavirus.

And at least another 58 were being monitored in the prison's contagious disease and quarantine units, she said.

"It is likely these people have been in hundreds of housing areas and common areas over recent weeks and have been in close contact with many other people in custody and staff," said Sherman, warning that cases could skyrocket.



"The best path forward to protecting the community of people housed and working in the jails is to rapidly decrease the number of people housed and working in them."

New York officials have consistently downplayed the number of infections in its prisons and jails. The Associated Press has found in conversations with current and former inmates.

The city's jail agency and

its city-run healthcare provider did not respond to messages seeking comment on the letter. On Friday, the city's Department of Corrections said just one inmate had been diagnosed with coronavirus, along with seven jail staff members. Late Saturday, the department acknowledged 19 inmates had tested positive — two fewer than in the board's letter — and 12 staff members.

Earlier this week, Juan Giron was transferred to Rikers Island from an upstate facility after his sentence was vacated because the judge had failed to consider him for youthful offender treatment. After going through intake, where he underwent health screening, he was taken to a dormitory that housed more than two dozen men, their beds lined up next to one another, spaced a few feet apart.

"This is like a shelter. So

everybody is out and about. You're talking to people, mingling" Giron said. "Last night, a guy is brought in at around 6 p.m., and a few hours later, two police officers come in with masks and gloves on and try to give the guy a mask. They looked scared, didn't even want to touch him. They told him to pack up, so he packed up and they took him out. 'It was crazy,'"

"We asked one of the officers and they said, 'that's the

This June 20, 2014 file photo shows the Rikers Island jail complex in New York with the Manhattan skyline in the background. More than three dozens of people have tested positive for coronavirus in New York City jails, including at the notorious Rikers Island jail complex, the board that oversees the city's jail system said Saturday, March 21, 2020.

process we are doing now for guys who have the virus'," Giron said, adding that others who had had contact with the man have not been questioned or notified about his status.

More than 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States—more than anywhere in the world — and there are growing fears that an outbreak could spread rapidly through a vast network of federal and state prisons, county jails and detention centers.

It's a tightly packed, fluid population that is already grappling with high rates of health problems and, when it comes to the elderly and the intern, elevated risks of serious complications. With limited capacity nationally to test for COVID-19, men and women inside worry that they are last in line when showing flu-like symptoms, meaning that some may be infected without knowing it.

Moderates may decide Trump's political fate in wake of virus

LARGO, Fla. (AP)—As restaurants across the country stacked chairs on tables and shut their doors to try to contain the deadly coronavirus, what would be the final visitors streamed into the Conservative Grounds coffee shop in Largo, Florida.

Fox News played on the televisions. Patrons posed for photos in a replica of the Oval Office. An 80-year-old man, defying officials' advice to stay home, beamed near a life-sized cutout of a grinning President Donald Trump.

This Trump-themed coffee shop embodies the right edge of the country's political divide. Outside its walls, state officials put in place an unprecedented shutdown of public life and Trump scrambled to fight a virus that he had accused political opponents and the media of pushing as a "new hoax." Criticism of the president's preparedness was rampant.

Inside, customers gave Trump an A-plus on his response to the spreading pandemic. "He's doing great things," the owner said Wednesday.

America has a history of unifying in trying times and

rallying around the president. But after years of deep division, in the earliest, head-spinning days of the pandemic, a fractured electorate largely viewed Trump's performance through the lens they chose long ago. But the stakes are higher than they've ever been. The body count will rise; the economy will almost certainly crater. Trump's political fate may be left up to the sliver of moderates in the middle, who will choose whether to blame him for the crisis spiraling on his watch.

"This could be the coup de grace of his presidency. The way he handles this, history will judge, as well as the American people," said Brandon Brice, host of a radio show called "Straight Talk" in Detroit, who supported Trump in 2016 and is looking to how he handles this crisis before deciding if he will again. "This is the president's moment, right now."

Trump for weeks denied the seriousness of the outbreak when it first emerged in China. In January, he assured the nation that "we have it very well under control" and he compared the vi-

rus to the seasonal flu.

His supporters followed his lead: Surveys from early and mid-March found distinct differences in how Democrats and Republicans reacted. A poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 36% of Democrats said they were very worried that they or family members would contract the virus, compared with 21% of Republicans.

Views on Trump's handling of the crisis are also shaded heavily by partisanship. A Gallup poll found 82% of Republicans expressed some confidence in Trump. Among Democrats, that number was just 12%.

Whit Ayres, a Republican pollster, noted throughout Trump's presidency, his approval rating has hovered between 42% and 46%, with little change despite the endless cycle of controversy and chaos. Recent polling shows that has remained steady.

"Attitudes about the president, both pro and con, are deeply ingrained and almost impervious to the effect of news," he said. "Now, we've never had an event quite like this one."

US tourists stranded abroad desperate to secure return

After being confined to a hotel room in Peru and watching "heavily armed guards" patrolling the streets, Linda Scruggs was awash with emotions Saturday when she glimpsed out the airplane window at the Florida Everglades below.

Scruggs and her traveling companion, Mike Rustici, were among dozens of American citizens who caught a LATAM Airlines flight to Miami after being trapped for days in the Peruvian capital of Lima. Like thousands of U.S. tourists and Americans living abroad, the couple was caught in limbo as nations closed their borders to try to stop the spread of the deadly new coronavirus. For days, the couple didn't know how or when they would make it home — especially after the State Department essentially told them they were on their own.

"I never had this feeling before even after 9/11," she said after the plane landed. "I was filled with gratitude, relief, concern and sadness that our country isn't doing more."

Scruggs and Rustici, both in their 40s and from Nashville, Tennessee, had flown to Peru

with plans to hike Machu Picchu's complex of Inca ruins, but within days after they landed, Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra declared an emergency, ordering the country's borders closed.

They said they were only given about 24 hours' notice to leave Peru but couldn't find a flight. The virus has caused more than 12,000 deaths around the world, but the figure goes up every day as Americans in Morocco, Ecuador and other nations struggle to find a way home.

For most people, the new virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority recover.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday that he is working to repatriate Americans. But Scruggs and Rustici said they got little help or information from the State Department, a sentiment expressed by Americans trapped in other countries. The State Department did not respond to

messages seeking comment.

"I think we're still processing it," Rustici said. "A big mixture of relief and guilt, it's almost like survivor's guilt. We know that there are so many people still over there and we've been doing so much the last four or five days to get ourselves and everybody else out and we managed to do so because we're savvy travelers. We had the resources to keep moving and try a lot of things, but in the end, we just got really lucky."

Scruggs and Rustici were in the hotel room Saturday morning when they received an email from a local tour operator saying there might be seats on a flight from Lima to Miami. They paid \$800 each and took a bus to the airport with other Americans trying to catch the same plane.

There were about 200 people waiting outside the airport when they arrived and a security guard took them inside, where they faced what Scruggs described as a "tense and chaotic" scene with long lines. Some Americans were accompanied by babies and children. (AP)

Asia

N. Korea test fires missiles; Seoul slams it as inappropriate

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea on Saturday fired two presumed short-range ballistic missiles into the sea, South Korea's military said, as it continues to expand military capabilities amid deadlocked nuclear negotiations with the Trump administration and a crippling global health crisis.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectiles were fired around 6:45 and 6:50 a.m. from an area around the county of Sonchon, western North Korea. They flew 410 kilometers (255 miles) cross-country on an apogee of 50 kilometers (31 miles) before landing in waters off the eastern coast.

South Korea and the U.S. were analyzing the launches. Seoul's military urged the North to immediately stop its "very inappropriate" military demonstrations when the world is struggling to cope with the coronavirus pandemic.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the projectiles didn't reach Japanese territory or its exclusive economic zone.

The North conducted two previous rounds of similar short-range launches and other military exercises this month after leader Kim Jong Un en-



AP
In this Friday, March 20, 2020, photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervises an artillery firing competition between army units in the country's west in North Korea.

tered the new year vowing to bolster his nuclear deterrent in face of "gangster-like" U.S. sanctions and pressure.

While the North is clearly determined to advance its missile capabilities, Japan's Defense Minister Taro Kono said Pyongyang's demonstrations could also be aimed at "brac-

ing the regime together" amid the coronavirus crisis.

It wasn't immediately clear what North Korea tested. Flight data released by the South Korean and Japanese militaries suggest that the North could have tested one of its new mobile, solid-fuel missile systems it first demon-

strated last year.

Military analysts say such weapons, which are designed to overwhelm missile defense systems with their maneuverability and low-altitude flights, potentially strengthen the North's ability to strike targets in South Korea and Japan, including U.S. bases there.

North Korea in recent months has also demonstrated what it described as a "super large" multiple rocket launcher, which experts say was likely tested earlier this month.

North Korea's state media earlier reported that Kim supervised an artillery firing

competition between army units in the country's west on Friday.

The KCNA said Kim expressed satisfaction over the exercise that was aimed at evaluating combat readiness. The report didn't mention any direct comments by Kim toward Washington or Seoul.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency also said on Saturday that the North has decided to hold a session of its rubber-stamp parliament on April 10. It wasn't immediately clear what would be discussed.

Nuclear talks have stale-

mated since the collapse of the second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in early 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Following the breakdown in talks, the North ended a 17-month pause in ballistic activity and conducted at least 13 rounds of weapons launches last year while pressuring Washington and Seoul for concessions. Those weapons also included a developmental mid-range missile that could be launched from submarines.

Some experts say the lull in North Korean launches between November and March could have been caused by the coronavirus pandemic, which started in mainland China in December.

Although Kim has vowed to build up his nuclear arsenal and achieve a "frontal breakthrough" against sanctions while urging his nation to stay resilient in a struggle for economic "self-reliance," some experts say North Korea's self-imposed lockdown amid the coronavirus crisis could potentially hamper his ability to mobilize people for labor.

China, on virus PR offensive, sends masks and experts abroad

BEIJING (AP)—As the fight against a new virus shifts to Europe and beyond, China is supplying millions of masks and other desperately needed items to struggling governments, hoping to build political ties and defuse criticism that it allowed the disease to spread early on.

Serbia's president plans to be at the airport this weekend to welcome a shipment of medical supplies from his "brother and friend," Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Xi's government has flown gloves and protective clothing to Liberia. It is sending 100,000 test kits to the Philippines. More than 10 flights carrying millions of masks and other supplies are bound for the Czech Republic this week.

China, said Czech Interior Minister Jan Hamacek, is "the only country capable of supplying Europe with such amounts."

It's part of an effort by the Communist Party to reshape the narrative, from one of early missteps to a nation that acted decisively to bring the outbreak under control. China is touting its deliveries of ventilators and masks overseas and dispatching its medical experts to share the

lessons of its success.

China hopes to benefit from a realization in the West of how difficult it is to bring the virus under control, said Julian Ku, a law professor at Hofstra University in New York.

"The Chinese government's failures ... will be less harshly viewed in light of the failures of other governments to respond effectively as well," he said.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic blasted the European Union and praised China for offering help when he announced a state of emergency to combat the outbreak. His country wants to join the EU, but his government has moved closer to Russia and China in a seesaw battle for influence.

"I believe in my brother and friend Xi Jinping and I believe in China's help," Vucic said. "European solidarity," he said, was just a fairy tale.

EU officials denied they were stopping aid to Serbia, but said their first priority was EU members.

China has given \$20 million to the World Health Organization for COVID-19 efforts. While the EU and the U.S. have made larger pledges to combat the disease, they are now preoccupied by

the crisis at home.

The Chinese "are winning points," said Theresa Fallon, the founder of the Center for Russia Europe Asia Studies in Brussels. "Serbia thinks that China is their savior."

Six weeks ago, Chinese authorities were trying to quell outrage at home and condemnation abroad. The critics said due to politically motivated foot-dragging, China had mishandled the viral outbreak racing through a major province and its capital, Wuhan.

Now the criticism is raining down on governments from Tehran to Washington, D.C. A visiting Chinese Red Cross official chastised Italy on Thursday for letting so many people stroll the streets of Milan.

"Right now we need to stop all economic activity, and we need to stop the mobility of people," said Executive Chairman Sun Shuopeng.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus.

ASIAN BRIEFS

India stays home in 'people's curfew' to stem coronavirus

NEW DELHI (AP)—The typically boisterous streets of India's capital fell silent on Sunday as the country observed a 14-hour "people's curfew" that Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for in a national address to stem the rising coronavirus caseload. In a speech last week, Modi asked Indians to stay at home but go out on their balconies at 5 p.m. with pots and pans to cheer front-line health care workers. Most businesses were expected to be closed on Sunday except for essential services like hospitals. A road in New Delhi near a Sufi shrine where hundreds of pilgrims often camp was empty except for an occasional passing car.

2 Sri Lanka inmates killed in riot over virus restrictions

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Inmates in a Sri Lanka prison scuffled with guards and some tried to escape during a protest against new strict measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, leaving two dead and six wounded, police said Sunday. Tensions erupted Saturday at the Anuradhapura prison when guards tried to control the riot. In the commotion, guards opened fire to prevent inmates from fleeing, police said. Anuradhapura is about 200 kilometers (120 miles) north of Colombo. Prisoners were

complaining about the decision by the authorities not to allow visitors as a move to contain the virus. Sri Lanka has imposed a three-day countrywide curfew since Friday as the number of cases has risen to 77. On Sunday, a police statement said two inmates died and six others were being treated at a hospital. Police said no inmates escaped and security at the prison has been strengthened with additional police teams, including commandos.

Road crash in Bangladesh kills at least 13

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—A speeding truck rammed a passenger vehicle in southeastern Bangladesh, leaving at least 13 people dead and three others injured, a police official said Sunday. The accident took place late Saturday night at Chunti area in Chittagong district when the salt-laden truck from the coastal district of Cox's Bazar hit the passenger vehicle, said police Superintendent S.M. Rashidul Haque. He said 10 of the passengers died at the scene while three others succumbed to their injuries on the way to a hospital. The area is 216 kilometers (134 miles) southeast of the capital, Dhaka. He said the rescue operation was ongoing. Road accidents in the South Asian nation kill thousands every year because of lax enforcement of traffic law, bad road condition and poor signaling system.

World

Virus advances around the world as medical supplies dwindle

By YANAN WANG and FRANCES D'EMILIO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The virus pandemic advanced Sunday after the U.S. and Europe reported soaring new cases, prompting a scramble in some regions to set up additional hospital beds and replenish much-needed medical supplies.

Italy announced its biggest day-to-day increase of infections, which rose by 6,600 with nearly 800 new fatalities from the virus that causes COVID-19. The country's total

death toll of more than 4,825 has surpassed the number of deaths in China, where the first cases emerged late last year.

In the U.S., where multiple states have ordered residents to stay indoors, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the government is "literally scouring the globe looking for medical supplies." Health care workers from Oklahoma City to Minneapolis sought donations of protective equipment. Staff at a Detroit hospital began creating homemade face masks for workers. Even

rural hospitals were strained as people increasingly felt the pandemic closing in.

In the farming community of Vidalia, Georgia, Dr. Robert Wagner said medical staffers at his emergency room are wearing face masks for their entire 12-hour shifts and changing in and out of full protective gear every time they see people considered a potential coronavirus case — all while dealing with a regular flow of patients injured in car crashes and suffering chest pains or other maladies.

They are testing an increasing number of patients for the virus and worried that the 50-bed Meadows Regional Medical Center could eventually become overwhelmed.

"There's definitely this underlying fear in the community. You can see it," he said.

In Washington, negotiators from Congress and the White House resumed top-level talks on a ballooning \$1 trillion-plus economic rescue package, urged by President Donald Trump to strike a deal to steady a nation thoroughly

upended by the coronavirus pandemic. Trump continued to strike a confident tone about the nation's ability to defeat the pandemic soon, even as health leaders nationwide acknowledged that the U.S. is nowhere near the peak for the outbreak.

"We are going to be celebrating a great victory in the not too distant future," he said.

The contagion is starting to be felt in U.S. cities far from major metropolitan areas, including places that have resisted drastic shutdown measures. About 150 countries now have confirmed cases, and deaths have been reported in more than 30 American states. There are now more than 300,000 confirmed cases worldwide, according to a running tally by Johns Hopkins University.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms,

such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

In Italy, local authorities in the hard-hit northern regions have been pleading with the national government to enact stricter measures. Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte told the nation he was tightening a lockdown and shutting down all production facilities except those providing essential goods and services. He cautioned citizens to be calm and patient, saying there is no alternative.



AP

This photo shows the Royal Mile, part of the Old Town of Edinburgh, Scotland, Britain, Saturday, March 21, 2020, on the first day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered pubs and restaurants across the country to close as the government announced measures to cover the wages of workers who would otherwise lose their jobs due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Africa lockdowns begin as coronavirus cases above 1,000

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)—Lockdowns have begun in Africa as coronavirus cases rise above 1,000, while Nigeria on Saturday announced it is closing airports to all incoming international flights for one month in the continent's most populous country.

Rwanda said all unnecessary movements outside the home are banned for two weeks as of midnight except for essential services such as health care and shopping. The East African nation, which has 17 cases, told all public and private employees to work from home. Tunisia earlier imposed a lockdown as well.

Meanwhile, two African heads of state appeared to defy their own travel restrictions to attend another president's inauguration.

Uganda, Eritrea and Angola announced their first cases, meaning 42 of Africa's 54

countries are now affected. Congo and Ghana reported their first death; Burkina Faso reported two new ones. Uganda is closing its borders to all but cargo. Ethiopia said all arriving passengers will face mandatory quarantine as of Monday. Republic of Congo and Ghana are closing their borders. But Somalia is lifting its ban on international flights for two days so stranded citizens can come home.

Nigeria's international flight ban came a day after Africa's busiest airport, in Johannesburg, blocked foreigners from disembarking and two major airlines — Ethiopian Airlines and South African Airways — announced sweeping cancellations of international flights.

Nigeria's announcement followed its first cases in the capital, Abuja.

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority said "emergency

and essential" flights are exempt from the ban that starts Monday. An adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari, Bashir Ahmad, said Nigeria also plans to suspend passenger rail services starting then.

While Angola closed air, land and sea borders this week, President Joao Lourenco attended Saturday's inauguration of Namibian President Hage Geingob. Also there was President Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, which this week suspended international travel by all government employees. Namibia has three cases.

"My conscience tells me ... I did not give a bad example to Angolans," Lourenco told state television, saying his earlier decree left room for extraordinary circumstances, the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported.

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa also was

there. On Saturday, his country announced the first case in the capital, Harare.

Africa now has more than 1,100 cases, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Burkina Faso now has the most virus deaths of any country in sub-Saharan Africa and the most cases in West Africa with 64.

Several government ministers there have tested positive. On Friday, President Roch Marc Christian Kabore announced the country's two international airports would close for two weeks with exceptions for military and cargo.

Burkina Faso is one of Africa's most fragile states with a growing humanitarian crisis caused by attacks linked to Islamic extremists. More than 130 health centers have closed, the government and aid groups say.

Israeli leader offers to step down next year in unity deal

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israel's prime minister Saturday said he is ready to step down next year as part of a proposed power-sharing agreement with his chief rival meant to steer the country through the coronavirus crisis and end a year-long political deadlock.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made his proposal during a nationally televised interview, calling for the formation of a three-year "emergency" unity government with the rival Blue and White Party.

Netanyahu told Channel 12 TV that he would remain as prime minister for the first year and a half, and allow Blue and White leader Benny Gantz to assume the post for a second year-and-a-half term in September 2021. He said each party would have an equal number of seats in the Cabinet.

"I will give up the prime minister's post in another year and a half," Netanyahu said.

Yair Lapid, a senior Blue and White leader, dismissed Netanyahu's unity offer as insincere. "Next week, we will go to choose a new parliament speaker and work to battle coronavirus for the good of the people," he said.

Israel is facing a growing threat from the coronavirus pandemic. It has detected nearly 900 cases and on Friday reported its first death. With the public largely

confined to their homes, the economy appears to be in great danger, with tens of thousands of people losing their jobs.

Blue and White has accused Netanyahu of using the coronavirus crisis to undermine the country's democratic institutions and try to derail his scheduled trial on corruption charges. Senior members of Gantz' party have expressed skepticism at previous power-sharing overtures by Netanyahu, concerned that he would not follow through on his promises to cede power.

Israel this month held its third inconclusive election in under a year. Netanyahu's Likud emerged as the largest single party, but fell short of securing a required parliamentary majority. A slim majority of lawmakers has endorsed Gantz as their choice for prime minister, though it is unclear whether he will be able to cobble together a governing coalition either.

Gantz now has just over three weeks to form a new government. In the meantime, he is trying to push through legislation in parliament that would in effect prevent Netanyahu from serving as prime minister in the future. The legislation would impose term limits on the prime minister and bar a politician indicted on criminal charges, like Netanyahu, from being prime minister.

Health & Wellness

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Staying socially isolated doesn't mean you have to cancel your social plans. You just need to adjust them a bit.

If you've got a webcam and an internet connection, you can still host dinner parties, happy hours, game nights, karaoke sessions and more. We've got some technical advice for ways to get set up and share your screen—and then some ideas for what to do.

Before you begin, know to expect some technical difficulties. Try to have a sense of humor about the whole thing. Most of us aren't video-conferencing pros. (Here's some advice about how to set up your laptop and physical space for an optimal video experience.) It's likely going to take a little trial and error to get set up the first time.

Once you're ready to go, here's how to get started.

Getting set up

If you want to see or hear your friends, here are your options.

Phone call. You can always call people and use speakerphone. If you have friends or relatives who don't feel confident setting up a webcam, hearing their voice is better than nothing.

FaceTime. If you both have Apple devices, you can FaceTime. You can set it up as a one-to-one video call or set up a Group FaceTime with up to 32 people. (Group FaceTime requires newer devices and an updated iOS; check this site for full requirements.) If your hands are going to be occupied and you're joining from a phone or iPad, make sure you've got a stack of books ready to lean your device up against.

Google Duo. If anyone in your planned get-together doesn't have an Apple device, Google Duo is basically an Android version of FaceTime. The app is free to download. Up to 8 people can join a Duo call.

Skype. Up to 10 people can join a Skype group video call. Skype is free to download and works on phones, tablets and computers with webcams. If you're playing host, it'll be easier to set up the call if you're on a laptop or desktop computer, but other participants don't have to be. Add your friend's Skype contact name. Then click on their name from your contacts list before clicking the camera button in the upper-right corner to start the video call.

To share what's on your screen, hover your mouse in the video and click the icon that looks like two stacked squares on the bottom right of the video call screen and click the "Share screen" button. (If you've never done this before, your computer may prompt you to adjust your system preferences, relaunch Skype and start the call again.) You will be prompted to click "Start sharing" on a button at the bottom of the screen one more time. You and your group of friends will be able to see each other's videos at the top of the shared screen. (For more information, visit [skype.com](https://www.skype.com).)

Google Hangouts. If you have Gmail, that means you already have a Google account you can use to set up Hangouts for free. Go to hangouts.google.com and click "Start a new hangout." You can invite other

people by their Gmail addresses or by emailing them a link. (That's especially handy if you want to set up the Hangout link ahead of time for a large group or if you expect some people to be dropping in later.) You can set it up as a voice or video hangout. Up to 25 people can join a video Hangout and up to 150 people can join a voice-only Hangout.

To share your screen once the Hangout has begun, hover your mouse in the call and click the three vertical dots on the upper-right hand side of the screen and click "Share screen." (You may be prompted to adjust your system's preferences to allow this if you've never done it

WHAT TO DO

Dinner party/happy hour

This one is pretty straightforward. Everyone joins the videoconference and then eats or drinks. Quartz has some ideas for dinner party conversation starters if you run out of things to talk about, and this list from PopSugar has some fun ones that can mostly be adapted for the quarantine situation.

Karaoke

All your favorite karaoke haunts are closed, but that doesn't mean the singing has to stop. Gather your friends for some karaoke through Google Hangouts or Skype.

here. Pro tip: If you're playing a game you've never played before, you might consider watching a YouTube video of someone playing it and explaining it.

Game night idea: Analog board games

If you and your friends have a copy of the same board game on your shelf at home—say, Monopoly—you can all set it up and just move the pieces at the same time. Think of it as the modern version of chess by mail. (Incidentally, this would also work if you and a friend both have a chessboard.) This is easiest with games that only require dice rolls. Something where you'd all have to dig the same unique card out of a pile to keep

games, select the puzzle you want to play, click "start," and after it loads, click the icon on the upper left that resembles a person with a plus sign. That will generate a link that you can copy and paste and email them. (This only works with one other player at a time.) Games on [latimes.com](https://www.latimes.com) are free, so the other player does not need to be a subscriber.

Game night idea: Social games

Obviously, if you and your friends are already into "Overwatch" and "Fortnite," you don't need us to tell you what to do. Have fun.

If you and your friend both have a Nintendo Switch, you can get classics such as "Mario Kart" and play together.

If you want to play with a group, the Jackbox Party Pack is a crowd-pleaser perfectly suited to social isolation. Six versions of the Jackbox Party Pack have been released, each with a different variety of trivia, drawing and word games. The packs are \$12.49 to \$29.99 and available on multiple platforms including Steam, Playstation 4, Xbox One, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Android TV. If you're on a computer, Steam is probably the easiest way to go and free to download. (You still have to pay for Jackbox though.)

Everyone plays using their phone as a controller, so you can all be in the same room or on opposite sides of the planet. Some favorites include Fibbage, where you try to fool other players by filling in the blanks on noteworthy new stories; Quiplash, where you compete head-to-head to come up with the funniest answers; and Trivia Murder Party, which is like if the classic "You Don't Know Jack" trivia game was hosted by the guy from "Saw." (It's much funnier than it sounds.) The sophistication level and occasional adult humor of most of the Jackbox games make them suited to an older crowd—teenagers and up.

How to set it up: Launch Jackbox from whatever platform you're using. Start a new game of whichever you want to play. Set up a video conference and share your screen. Other players can be on video or voice-only, as long as they can see your screen and have a phone or tablet on which to play. No one else needs to download or buy anything to join in. After you start the game, go to jackbox.tv and you'll be prompted to enter the room code (you'll see it on your screen) and your name. You, as the host, will have the power to start the game once everyone is ready.

Game night idea: Tabletop RPGs

There has truly never been a better time to get into Dungeons and Dragons. The game master needs a copy of the rules (the makers of D&D offer a short version for free online) and a rough understanding of the basics. Other players only need a pencil, paper and dice (or an app that simulates dice-rolling; or go to this website that does it for you.)

If fantasy isn't your thing, D&D is far from the only tabletop RPG out there. Polygon put together this helpful guide to starting your first Dungeons and Dragons game, along with suggestions for other RPGs you can try. Paste Magazine has a list of less complex RPG-style games if you're just starting out.



If you've got a webcam and an internet connection, you can still host dinner parties, happy hours, game nights, karaoke sessions and more.

The ultimate guide to hanging out virtually with your friends

By JESSICA ROY AND DORANY PINEDA
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Watch party

Social distancing doesn't mean you have to Netflix and chill alone. The streaming service has a Google Chrome extension called Netflix Party where friends can watch movies together and share their reactions through a chat room. All you need is Google Chrome browser, an extension and a Netflix account. You can do the same on Facebook.

Book club

This one is simple: pick a book to read with loved ones and video call each other to chat about it. Libraries in L.A. County are closed through the end of the month, but you can still get ebooks online through the Libby app if you have a library card. This is also a great opportunity to support independent bookstores in your area by buying your book-club picks online. Many are offering free or reduced shipping costs and curbside pickup. If your group doesn't have the attention span for a whole book—or if you want to get together sooner—you can all decide to read the same longform article.

Game night

Just because going out is canceled doesn't mean game night has to be. You've got a few different options for recreating your weekend plans

things moving will be too slow.

Something like Cards Against Humanity or Apples to Apples could work too if you all have it. One player would hold up the prompt card, and everyone would pick an answer card from their hand. Then players would hold up their answers to the camera for the judge to decide. You lose the anonymity of the regular version of these games, but these are challenging times. And we all have to make adjustments.

With word games like Scattergories, only one person needs to own the game. Everyone else just needs a pen and paper. The host can share his, her or their screen with the categories listed somewhere like a Google Doc. The host rolls the dice to decide the letter, opens the categories screen so everyone can see them, sets the timer and then you're off.

Game night idea: App games

It's 2012 all over again. Words With Friends, Draw Something and other app games are still kicking around and just waiting for you to challenge someone. You can be on a video call from your computer and playing together on your phones at the same time.

The L.A. Times has free games too. You can challenge a friend to do the day's crossword puzzle or Sudoku with you. Go to [latimes.com/](https://www.latimes.com/)

Life & Style

Crossover country superstar Kenny Rogers dies at 81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Kenny Rogers, the smooth, Grammy-winning balladeer who spanned jazz, folk, country and pop with such hits as “Lucille,” “Lady” and “Islands in the Stream” and embraced his persona as “The Gambler” on records and on TV, died Friday night. He was 81.

He died at home in Sandy Springs, Georgia, representative Keith Hagan told The Associated Press. He was under hospice care and died of natural causes, Hagan said.

The Houston-born performer with the husky voice and silver beard sold tens of millions of records, won three Grammys and was the star of TV movies based on “The Gam-

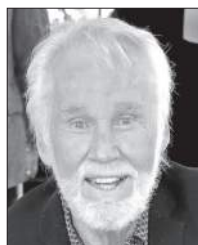
bler” and other songs, making him a superstar in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Rogers thrived for some 60 years before retired from touring in 2017 at age 79. Despite his crossover success, he always preferred to be thought of as a country singer.

“You either do what everyone else is doing and you do it better, or you do what no one else is doing and you don’t invite comparison,” Rogers told The Associated Press in 2015. “And I chose that way because I could never be better than Johnny Cash or Willie or Waylon at what they did. So I found something that I could do that didn’t invite comparison to them. And I think people thought it was my desire

to change country music. But that was never my issue.”

His “Islands in the Stream” duet partner Dolly Parton posted a video on Twitter on Saturday morning, choking up as she held a picture of the two of them together. “I loved Kenny with all my heart and my heart is broken and a big ole chunk of it is gone with him today,” Parton said in the video.

“Kenny was one of those artists who transcended beyond one format and geographic borders,” says Sarah Trahern, chief executive officer of the Country Music Association. “He was a global superstar who



Rogers

helped introduce country music to audiences all around the world.”

Rogers was a five-time CMA Award winner, as well as the recipient of the CMA’s Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013, the same year he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He received 10 awards from the Academy of Country Music. He sold more than 47 million records in the United States alone, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.

A true rags-to-riches story, Rogers was raised in public

housing in Houston Heights with seven siblings. As a 20-year-old, he had a gold single called “That Crazy Feeling,” under the name Kenneth Rogers, but when that early success stalled, he joined a jazz group, the Bobby Doyle Trio, as a standup bass player.

But his breakthrough came when he was asked to join the New Christy Minstrels, a folk group, in 1966. The band reformed as First Edition and scored a pop hit with the psychedelic song, “Just Dropped In (To See What Condition

My Condition Was In).” Rogers and First Edition mixed country-rock and folk on songs like “Ruby, Don’t Take Your Love To Town,” a story of a Vietnam veteran begging his girlfriend to stay.

After the group broke up in 1974, Rogers started his solo career and found a big hit with the sad country ballad “Lucille,” in 1977, which crossed over to the pop charts and earned Rogers his first Grammy. Suddenly the star, Rogers added hit after hit for more than a decade.

Virus brings worry, waiting at NYC’s most famous eateries

By DEEPTI HAJELA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

They’re some of New York City’s most iconic eateries, feeding New Yorkers and on visitors’ must-see lists for decades, some for more than a century.

They’ve been through a lot in those years—wars, financial crises, blackouts, a terrorist attack. But this pandemic, and the steps New York and other places are taking to fight it, like shutdowns and social distancing? It’s like nothing they’ve ever seen.

The coronavirus “seemed like an avalanche, the speed at which things changed,” said David Berson, general manager at Peter Luger, the Brooklyn steakhouse that opened in 1887 and has been operated by his family since 1950.

The state order for restaurants to halt dine-in service and allow for only delivery and takeout has been a huge challenge at Luger, a special-occasion kind of place with high-end prices that dry-ages



In this March 19, 2020 photo, chairs are stacked on the tables of Katz’s Delicatessen on the Lower East Side of New York.

its own steaks and orders its supply well in advance.

It has meant severely cutting back on restaurant staff, down to a skeleton crew of about half a dozen from a normal contingent of about 100, Berson said. Everyone’s being paid their usual salaries for the

time being.

It also means figuring out some inventory concerns, because right now, “we have a lot of dry-aged meat,” he said. “Literal tons.”

They’ve found ways to use some of it for a good cause, like bringing lunch for hospi-

tal workers.

It’s such a contrast from how Berson remembers the atmosphere after the Sept. 11 attacks, when the ask for people was to go out and support businesses.

Now “the best thing to do is the opposite, stay home,” he said.

Plácido Domingo resigns from opera union, donates \$500,000

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Superstar Plácido Domingo has resigned from the U.S. union that represents opera singers and will contribute \$500,000 to sexual harassment eradication programs and a fund that helps opera employees in crisis, the union said Friday.

The development came weeks after investigations by the American Guild of Musical Artists and Los Angeles Opera found sexual harassment allegations against the famed tenor, now 79, to be credible.

The investigations were launched after the publication of Associated Press stories last

year in which multiple women accused Domingo of harassment and abusing his power while he held management positions at LA Opera and Washington National Opera.

AGMA announced last month that its four-month investigation found Domingo had “engaged in inappropriate activity, ranging from flirtation to sexual advances, in and outside of the workplace.” Details of the allegations were not released, but people familiar with the investigation who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity said investigators found 27 people were sexu-

ally harassed or had witnessed inappropriate behavior by Domingo in the 1990s and 2000s.

LA Opera said its investigators had received 10 accusations that Domingo engaged in “inappropriate conduct” with women between 1986 and 2019, but “found no evidence Domingo had ever engaged in a quid pro quo or retaliated against any woman by not hiring her at LA Opera.”

Domingo helped found the LA Opera in the 1980s and led the company as general director from 2003 until last October, when he stepped down after the allegations surfaced.

Producer, actors lose appeal in Weinstein Co. bankruptcy

DOVER, Del. (AP)—A federal judge in Delaware has rejected an appeal by the producer and stars of the film “Silver Linings Playbook” stemming from a ruling in The Weinstein Co. bankruptcy case.

The judge on Friday upheld the bankruptcy court’s decision in a lawsuit filed against producer Bruce Cohen by Spyglass Media Group. Spyglass bought The Weinstein Co.’s assets in bankruptcy for \$289 million in 2018.

The suit against Cohen was seen as a test case to determine

how to handle claims asserted by several Hollywood stars who said they were owed royalties and profit participation payments from various film and television projects.

Spyglass sought and received a court ruling that Cohen’s production contract for “Silver Linings” was not executory, meaning that Spyglass was not liable for any prior contingent compensation obligations under the contract and that it purchased the rights to the film free and clear.

Cohen appealed the ruling,

joined by actors Bradley Cooper and Robert De Niro and director David O. Russell. The Directors Guild of America, the Screen Actors Guild—American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and the Writers Guild of America West filed a brief in support of the appellants.

The district court judge ruled Friday that the Weinstein Co. had acquired the rights to the film long ago could thus sell those rights to Spyglass free and clear of all claims as part of the bankruptcy asset sale.

Netflix establishes \$100 million virus relief fund

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Netflix said Friday it is establishing a \$100 million relief fund for workers in the worldwide creative community affected by the coronavirus-caused halt of most film and television production.

“This community has supported Netflix through the good times, and we want to help them through these hard times, especially while governments are still figuring out what economic support they will provide,” Ted Sarandos, Netflix’s chief creative officer, said in a statement.

The majority of the fund will support hard-hit crews on Netflix’s own productions around the world, Sarandos said, and will supplement the two weeks of pay the company already agreed to pay the cast and crew on suspended productions.

Electricians, carpenters and drivers, who largely are paid hourly wages and work on a project-to-project basis, are among the hundreds of thousands in the entertainment industry without jobs, he said.

More than 120,000 jobs

have been lost by members of IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees that represents cinematographers, editors, production designers and others, according to The Hollywood Reporter. The publication cited correspondence to members from the International Cinematographers Guild and Motion Picture Editors Guild.

In an effort to support the broader film and television industry, \$15 million of the Netflix fund will be distributed to “third parties and nonprofits providing emergency relief to out-of-work crew and cast in the countries where we have a large production base,” according to Sarandos’ statement.

In the U.S. and Canada, Netflix said it will donate \$1 million each to the SAG-AFTRA Covid-19 Disaster Fund, the Motion Picture and Television Fund and the Actors Fund Emergency Assistance in the United States, and \$1 million between the Fondation des Artistes and the AFC, formerly known as the Actors’ Fund of Canada.

Monaco's head of state Prince Albert II contracts new virus

PARIS (AP)—The palace of Monaco says its ruler, Prince Albert II, has tested positive for the new coronavirus but his health is not worrying.

Albert, 62, appeared to be the first head of state who has publicly said he contracted the virus.

In a statement Thursday, the palace said he is being treated by doctors from the Princess Grace Hospital, named after his U.S. actress mother. It says Albert is continuing to work from his home office in the palace and is in constant contact with members of his government.

In the statement, Albert urged residents of his tiny Mediterranean principality to respect confinement measures.

Albert is the second child of Princess Grace—formerly Grace Kelly—and Prince Rainier of Monaco. Albert became a five-time Olympic bobsledder and in recent years has been a global environmental campaigner.

Fluent in English and French, Albert graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts with a degree in political science in 1981, and is a member of the International Olympic Committee.

He and his wife, the former Charlene Wittstock, have twin children.

NBC News technician dies from coronavirus

NEW YORK (AP)—A technician who worked at NBC News' New York headquarters has died after testing positive for coronavirus, the network said on Friday.

Larry Edgeworth worked in NBC's fifth-floor equipment room, but for many of his 25 years was an audio technician that traveled on stories around the world, NBC News Chair-

man Andy Lack said.

He suffered from other health issues that put him in danger, Lack said. Health officials say that while the vast majority of people recover from coronavirus, people who are elderly or who have underlying medical conditions are most vulnerable to serious illness.

NBC had said Wednesday that a staff member had tested positive but did not reveal the name for privacy reasons. Edgeworth died Thursday.

"I want to remind you that it's more important now than ever that you take care of yourself," Lack said in a memo to NBC staff.

Virus: Graceland shuts, music festival postponed in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Elvis Presley's Graceland is temporarily closing in response to the new coronavirus outbreak.

The Memphis, Tennessee-based tourist attraction said Friday that tours of Presley's former home-turned-museum have been called off. Graceland said on its website that it will be temporarily closed from Saturday through April 3.

The tourist attraction is centered on the life and career of the late singer and actor. Presley died in Memphis on Aug. 16, 1977. He was 42.

About 500,000 people, including international travelers, visit Graceland each year. In addition to the museum, Graceland features restaurants, exhibition halls and a concert venue.

Some concerts and events have been re-scheduled, and tickets for tours that won't take place during the closing will be honored within one year of the original tour date, Graceland said.

Graceland's closing amid the global virus outbreak represents yet another blow to

Memphis' tourism industry. On Thursday, officials said the Beale Street Music Festival and the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest have been postponed because of the new coronavirus outbreak.

The Grand Ole Opry to play on in an empty theater

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The Grand Ole Opry, the longest running radio show in history, is playing on through the coronavirus outbreak by returning to its roots.

The country music institution, which has been airing Saturday nights for 94 years, is set to broadcast live on television this week in front of an empty venue. The show was originally aired without a live audience in its early days in 1925 on WSM, the AM station in Nashville, Tennessee, that still airs the radio broadcast every Saturday.

Normally the show is performed live in front of an audience of about 4,400 people at its current home, the Opry House, but the coronavirus forced the Opry to close its doors to the public last Saturday while the radio broadcast continued. This Saturday, country artists Brad Paisley, Vince Gill and Marty Stuart will perform acoustically to an empty theater, but the show will air live on television.

The performance will air on the Circle, a network that is a joint venture between the Opry Entertainment Group and Gray Television. Fans can also watch the performance on the Opry's YouTube page.

Stuart, a Grand Ole Opry member, will be playing by himself on stage with just his guitar and mandolin, without the Opry's normal backing band.

"We are at a point in the nation (when) people need hope," Stuart told The Associated

Press. "They need something to take their minds off what the news is telling us every time we turn on the news. That's what country music does. It was made for Saturday night."

Johnny Depp's libel case against UK tabloid stalled by virus

LONDON (AP)—Johnny Depp's libel suit against British tabloid The Sun was put on hold Friday as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Depp is suing the newspaper's parent company, News Group Newspapers, and executive editor Dan Wootton over a 2018 article claiming he was violent and abusive to his ex-wife Amber Heard.

A trial had been due to start Monday at the High Court in London, with Depp, Heard and other celebrities due to give evidence. But judge Andrew Nicol said Friday that he had "reached the reluctant conclusion that the trial does have to be adjourned."

The judge said two of Depp's legal representatives had already had to self-isolate because of the virus, and added that "no-one can predict whether others involved in the case, and I do not exclude myself, will either become infected or need to self-isolate."

Depp's lawyer, Jennifer Afia, told a preliminary hearing this week that the actor was at a "remote location" in the south of France and could not travel because of restrictions imposed to fight the pandemic.

Conan O'Brien to return to air, with an iPhone from home

NEW YORK (AP)—With iPhones and Skype, Conan O'Brien is going back on the air.

The late-night host said he will resume putting out new episodes of TBS' "Conan" on March 30. His staff will remain at home, and the show

will be cobbled together with O'Brien on an iPhone and guests via Skype.

"This will not be pretty, but feel free to laugh at our attempt," said O'Brien on Twitter.

The late-night shows have all shut down production due to the coronavirus pandemic to avoid congregating live audiences and large TV crews. Some hosts have pumped out web videos.

Jimmy Fallon has produced 10-minute "At Home" shows for NBC's "Tonight." In one episode, he did a video chat with Lin-Manuel Miranda. Jimmy Kimmel and David Spade have given monologues from their homes. On Monday, Stephen Colbert delivered a 10-minute monologue from his bathtub in a segment that was added to an episode that was otherwise a rerun of CBS's "The Late Show."

Cannes Film Festival postponed, potentially to June or July

NEW YORK (AP)—France's Cannes Film Festival, arguably the world's most prestigious film festival and cinema's largest annual gathering, has postponed its 73rd edition due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Organizers of the French Riviera festival, scheduled to take place May 12-23, said Thursday that they are considering moving the festival to the end of June or the beginning of July.

"Several hypotheses are being studied to preserve the festival, the main one of which would be a simple postponement," the festival said in a statement. "As soon as the development of the French and international health situation will allow us to assess the real possibility, we will make our decision known."

Organizers had been extremely reluctant to cancel Cannes. For weeks, its orga-

nizers deflected questions and tried to push through its selection process. But as the pandemic spread through France, it became all but inevitable that a massive gathering like Cannes would be canceled. On Saturday, France's Prime Minister Édouard Philippe ordered the closure of all restaurants, cafes and cinemas in France to increase social distancing and combat the virus.

Bravo's Andy Cohen, 'Bachelor' Colton Underwood have virus

Former star of "The Bachelor" Colton Underwood and talk-show host Andy Cohen have joined the growing group of celebrities who have tested positive for coronavirus.

Underwood posted a video on his social media pages saying he has been following all social distancing rules for a week, but tested positive on Friday.

The 28-year-old former football player who appeared as "The Bachelor" in 2019 says he began having symptoms, primarily exhaustion, a few days ago.

"The main thing is I can't even walk up a flight of stairs without being out of breath or going to the bathroom without having to sit down because I'm exhausted," he said.

Underwood says he is recovering and self-isolating at his girlfriend's family home in Huntington Beach, California.

Cohen the 51-year-old host of the long-running Bravo late-night show "Watch What Happens Live" said on Instagram and Twitter Friday afternoon that he has also tested positive, and will not do shows from home as he had planned.

"As much as I felt like I could push through whatever I was feeling to do #WWHL from home, we're putting a pin in that for now so I can focus on getting better," Cohen wrote.

Woman insists that her husband give up letters from late wife

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Charlie," and I have been married for seven years. We are in our mid-60s. This is the second marriage for both of us. He was widowed some years before we met. We have a good marriage. He is sweet and caring, but one issue causes friction between us. It's about letters he and his late wife exchanged.

They were high school sweethearts. She kept all the letters he sent her when he was away in college, and after she died, he wanted to keep them. It bothers me that he's still attached to them. Whenever we talk about the subject and I ask him to dispose of them, he gets defensive, says he doesn't understand why it bothers me and accuses me of being unreasonable. He says I don't even "let" him have a picture of his late wife among our family pictures around the house. My first marriage was very troubled, and I never wanted a picture of my late husband. But Charlie's was a happy one.

Am I unreasonable, or is it time to let the past stay in the past, as painful as it might be to detach from objects that were an intimate part of his previous marriage?

REASONING IN ILLINOIS

DEAR REASONING: Why have you not accepted that Charlie had a life before fate intervened, took his wife and you entered the picture? People who had miserable first marriages—as yours was—often choose not to remarry.

Charlie is who he is in part because of his happy marriage to his first wife. You are making a mistake by competing with her. Stop insisting that he get rid of the old letters, which hold great sentimental value for him. And if he would like to display a photo of his late wife, quit giving him heartburn. She's part of his history, and it's his house, too.

DEAR ABBY: I am being married in a couple of months. I feel like I'm living a real-life fairy tale—but not always in a good way. My fiancé's stepfamily has made it clear that they do not approve of our union. They have gone as far as to ask me to leave him. He is appalled by their behavior and has told them they are no longer welcome in our lives or at our wedding. They were livid and blamed me.

I don't want my wedding to be the cause of pain, so I have tried to be understanding, gracious and forgiving, but they are toxic people. My fiancé is my very own real-life Prince Charming, and I want nothing more than to spend the rest of my life with him.

Abby, I am terrified they are going to show up to our wedding anyway or try to somehow sabotage it. What should I do? If they show up, should I let them stay or have them removed? How do I prevent them from intruding in the future?

CINDERELLA IN NEW ENGLAND

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR CINDERELLA: Allow me to congratulate you and your fiancé on your upcoming nuptials and offer my sympathy for your grief, which is undeserved. You may need to hire professional security to ensure the peace, or see if security is provided at the venue. The way to prevent unwanted intruders in the future would be to move as far away from his family as is feasible.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

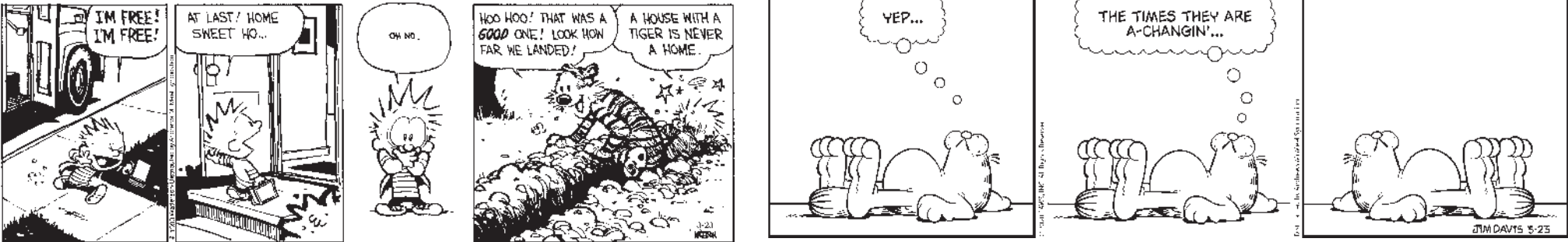
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

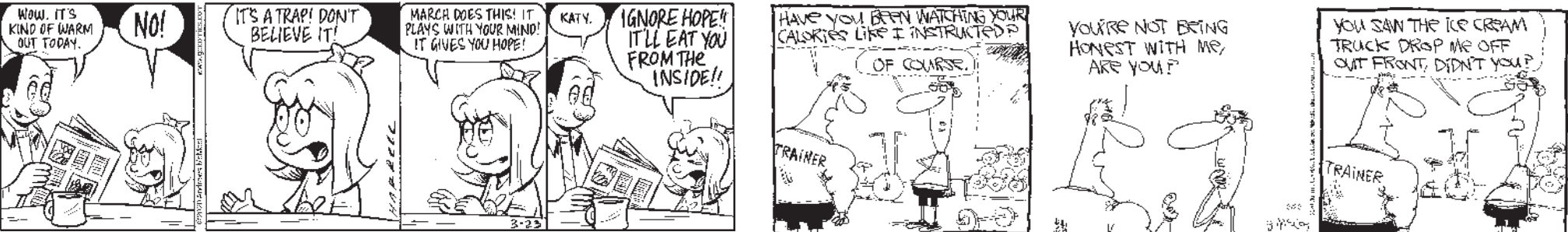


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Netting
- 5 Upscale auto
- 8 Junk email
- 12 Jazzy Fitzgerald
- 13 Peyton's brother
- 14 — Major
- 15 Caesar's "vidi"
- 16 Some hosiery
- 18 Fix
- 20 Volks-wagen model
- 21 Egyptian deity
- 23 "— haw!" (oater cry)
- 24 Kitchen storage areas
- 28 Nest setting
- 31 Web address
- 32 Govt. security
- 34 Actor Kilmer
- 35 Honey bunch?
- 37 Some police tactics

DOWN

- 1 Israel's
- 2 Differently
- 3 High-five
- 4 Aloha
- 5 Get
- 6 Roman
- 7 Trace
- 8 Twilight
- 9 Keep
- 10 Nick
- 11 Sail
- 17 Dinner for
- 19 "— It
- 22 Emporium
- 24 Young lion
- 25 "— you serious?"
- 26 "Gesund-heit!"
- 27 Begins
- 29 "Mangia!"
- 30 Overhead
- 33 Waffle brand
- 36 Fall
- 38 "Piece of cake!"
- 40 Ornate vase
- 42 "Waterloo"
- 43 Hardly
- 44 "Little Women"
- 46 Vagrant
- 47 Military no-show
- 48 Ticked (off)
- 50 Prefix with athlete

Solution time: 26 mins.

Last Friday's Answer 03/23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19				20		
			21			22		23		
24	25	26				27		28	29	30
31				32			33		34	
35			36		37			38		
		39		40		41				
42	43			44		45		46	47	48
49					50			51		
52				53				54		
55				56				57		

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Michelle Monaghan, 44; Keri Russell, 44; Catherine Keener, 61; Chaka Khan, 67.

Happy Birthday: Hash over the possibilities and how best to approach the goals you set. Make sure you understand what's entailed and the time involved before you agree to begin something new. Realism, coupled with practicality, will be required. Too much of anything will be your downfall. Be innovative and think big, but when it comes time to move forward, be moderate. Your numbers are 6, 18, 23, 25, 33, 39, 43.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Question whatever eludes you. Sum up whatever situation you face, and reflect. Your options are better than you think. Believe in your abilities, and refuse to make a shortsighted decision. Preparation is essential if you want to get concrete results. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): If you're going to bring about a change, you will have to submit a plan. Take a closer look at your finances, and make changes to your spending habits and monthly expenses. Put more effort into fixing rather than replacing faulty items. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't fold under pressure. Take on responsibilities that are doable. Trust your instincts, not what someone with lofty ideas wants you to support. Don't limit what you can do, but stop others from taking advantage of you. ★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Keep everything moving along. If you waffle or become inconsistent, you will have to

make up for lost time. Don't overanalyze when all that's required is putting one foot in front of the other. A partnership will entice you. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Be receptive, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. Concentrate on what you do best and how to get ahead. Don't sit back if someone tries to steal your thunder. If you've got something to sell, make your presentation. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Spend more time fleshing out your plans with someone who shares your sentiments. A couple of changes implemented now can ward off a problem later on. A kind gesture will encourage others to open up to you regarding sensitive issues. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't rely on anyone except yourself if you want things done correctly. Make an innovative decision that will help you get your point across. Say what's on your mind, and commit to someone willing to meet you halfway. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Get ready to execute your plan. Change is overdue, and it's up to you to make it happen. Ask for what you want, and go after your dreams. There are plenty of opportunities waiting for you to scoop up and get started. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Words and truth matter. Conversations will be challenging to decipher, and the truth is likely to be exaggerated. You can't control what others do, but you can make sure that you don't contribute to giving people the wrong impression. ★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): What goes around comes around. What you've experienced can help you make a better decision now. The element of surprise will work in your favor. A last-minute change will give you the edge you need when faced with competition. Romance is favored. ★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Let go of the past. Refuse to let temptation get the better of you. Investing in something risky or unhealthy because someone is coaxing you to get involved will bring you down. Show discipline and courage. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Consider what brings you joy, and head in that direction. If you need to pick up additional skills, do so; if reconnecting with someone you have worked alongside in the past will help you move forward now, make the call. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are impulsive, original and persuasive. You are aggressive and respectful.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

				1		5	2
	4		9	5			3
3					6		
	2	4	3	7			5
		9			7		
7			5	9	2	8	
		1					6
9				2	6		1
6	3		7				

Difficulty Level ★ 3/23

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WONDERWORD By DAVID CUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

AVIATION Solution: 10 letters

G G F R S L E E H W F S T E J
N N L I E P A S H L U N V S A
I I I A I S T E R L E O E I S
N D G T K E A R A E L V R P L
O I H O S V T V A V D L A O O
O L T H I U I F E I I D P R R
L G S E G R D D A N N E U O T
L I R D R N D P E R R I T R A
A A V A E G I S O A C A N E P
B G N I C E L Y T R I R E G V
L R E D C L P I L V C S I R O
I E S A I I O S A F E T Y A Y
M E R K R N G I S E D A O L A
P R S T Y S G N I T O L I P G
Y F A R E S T O L I P L A N E

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Aircraft, Airlines, Arrival, Aviator, Ballooning, Blimp, Cargo, Carry, Civil, Crop Dusting, Design, Evolved, Fares, Flights, Flying, Free, Fuel, Gears, Gliding, Heavier, Hot Air, Jets, Landing, Larger, Load, Open, Operation, Patrols, Piloting, Pilots, Plane, Rudders, Safety, Skies, Skills, Sky, Speed, Training, Travel, Trip, Voyage, Wheels

Last Friday's Answer: Apartments

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Calls for Tokyo Olympics postponement intensifies

DENVER (AP)—U.S. Olympic leaders are facing a growing rebellion inside their ranks about holding the Tokyo Games.

A board member of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee countered leadership by criticizing the IOC, and the USA Track and Field chief added to the call for a postponement because of the mushrooming coronavirus crisis.

USATF CEO Max Siegel sent a two-page note to his counterpart at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Sarah Hirshland, asking the federation to advocate for a delay. It came late Friday, only a few hours after USA Swimming's CEO sent a similar letter.

Now, the sports that accounted for 65 of America's 121 medals and 175 of its 554 athletes at the last Summer Games are on record in urging, in Siegel's words, "the USOPC, as a leader within the Olympic Movement, to use its voice and speak up for the athletes."

Also focused on leadership was Steve Mesler, a USOPC board member and Olympic champion bobsledder. In a blog post Friday, Mesler leveled much more criticism toward the IOC than Hirshland or the board chair, Susanne Lyons, did in earlier statements and interviews.

"The (IOC)... has not shown the leadership we Olympians desire out of those who are in charge," Mesler wrote, while careful to emphasize that these were his thoughts "as an Olympian and not those of the USOPC, its Board of Directors, or its leaders."

Other national committees are also calling on the IOC to act. The federations in Norway and Brazil went public with requests to postpone.

"Our clear recommendation is that the Olympic Games in Tokyo shall not take place before the COVID-19 situation is under firm control on a global scale," Norway's federation wrote in a letter to IOC President Thomas Bach.

It's the U.S., though, that brings the largest contingent to every Summer Games and wins the most medals—both factors that lead have led NBC to pay billions to televise the games through 2032. It would seem to give the USOPC leverage in talks about almost any subject with the IOC, but the federation has been reluctant to use its power. It spent years, in fact, trying to smooth over tense relations with its international partners.

And since Hirshland took over as CEO in 2018, the focus has been inward, as the sex-abuse scandals that have consumed American sports have shifted the focus to athlete welfare and safety.



AP
A group of students from Uruguay pose for a souvenir picture on the Olympic Rings set outside the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo, Saturday, March 21, 2020.

Hirshland and Lyons were insistent that the USOPC won't sacrifice athlete safety in the current crisis. But they stopped well short of pushing the IOC toward a postponement.

"The decision about the games does not lie directly with us," Lyons said in a conference call with reporters Friday. "It lies with (the World Health Organization), the Japanese government and the IOC. Under no circumstance would the USOPC send athletes into harm's way if didn't think it was safe."

Leaders of the track and swimming teams don't appear willing to take that risk, either, though whether they'll act on their own—without the sign-off from the USOPC—remains in question. The leader of the third sport that makes up the backbone of the Olympics—gymnastics—has sent a survey to athletes, asking for their thoughts on what the USA Gymnastics stance should be.

USA Track and Field already had its answer, thanks in part to online conversations led by their athlete representatives.

"If you go there and spread the virus and you go back home and kill one child, one grandmother, father, or even an athlete, is it worth it? The answer to us was no," said Wallace Spearmon, the vice president of the USATF athletes council.

Italian officials make emotional plea to IOC

In Rome, with the coronavirus death toll now higher in Italy than anywhere else, two senior sports executives from the country issued emotional

appeals Thursday to the International Olympic Committee to revise its stance over the Tokyo Games.

"I'm not against the Olympics. But saying that the Olympics will still go on is a big mistake in communication," Giovanni Petrucci, who served as president of the Italian Olympic Committee for 14 years, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"This pandemic is affecting the entire world," Petrucci added, his voice breaking up with despair. "I know about

the billion-dollar contracts, the insurance deals. I know it all. But human life is worth more than all of those things."

Petrucci's call came after regional Olympic officials rallied around the IOC's stance on opening the Tokyo Games as scheduled on July 24.

"I don't think I'm the only one who thinks this way. Others just don't want to say it," said Petrucci, who is now president of the Italian basketball federation. "I don't want to attack the IOC. There are too many people there that I know. But I don't

know what else to say. I'm not trying to create controversy. I'm a realist. Look at the medical bulletins."

Athletes have also started questioning the IOC's unwavering stance that the Olympics are still on.

Athleten Deutschland, the main advocacy group for German athletes, said Thursday that the IOC is "stubbornly moving ahead with the planning of the games," even though competitors are struggling to stay fit with restrictions on their lifestyle due to the virus.

Italy, with a population of 60 million, has recorded at

least 3,405 deaths, or roughly 150 more than in China—a country with a population over 20 times larger.

"There's no country that hasn't been affected. It's a matter of respect toward those that are suffering," Petrucci added, refusing to speculate whether the games should be canceled or postponed. "I'm not the one that should be saying. They should be saying this."

Paolo Barelli, the president of the Italian and European swimming federations, suggested the IOC needs to decide on the games' status by mid-April.

NBA may withhold players' salaries due to pandemic



NEW YORK—NBA players may have their salaries withheld as a result of the coronavirus. A league memo—which was sent Friday—indicated that the NBA is unsure whether it would start withholding salaries from players starting April 15, according to ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski.

The NBA has that power due to the force majeure clause, which states salary can be withheld in the case of war, natural disasters or pandemics. If the force majeure clause is enacted as a result of the coronavirus, players would lose "1/92.6 of a player's seasonal salary per canceled game," according to Wojnarowski.

The NBA intends to inform players of its decision before the players get paid April 15.

While NBA players could start losing out on money due to canceled games, there's still a chance they would eventually receive their full salaries. If the NBA is able to schedule a season later in the year—and is able to make up all the canceled games—those players would likely recoup the money they lost for the canceled games.

The NBA is considering that option. The league has reportedly looked at booking arena dates in August in the hopes that games can continue, and that the playoffs can be held, according to Wojnarowski.

Among professional sports leagues, the NBA has been hit hardest by the coronavirus. Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert became the first player in the league to test positive for the virus. His diagnosis led to the postponement of

the NBA season. A number of other NBA players have also tested positive for COVID-19, including Kevin Durant, Donovan Mitchell and Marcus Smart. Other players and people around the league have tested positive, but have opted to remain unidentified.

Meanwhile, without games, NBA players using their platforms in new way

Cleveland's Kevin Love did his best to reassure a skittish and scared public. Denver's Jamal Murray sat at his piano and played theme songs. Atlanta's Trae Young shot balled-up socks into a trash can. Miami's Goran Dragic, in his native Slovenian, told people to stay inside.

This is the new NBA normal in a coronavirus-dominated world.

Even without games, the league is trying to engage and

even encourage fans in these tough times.

So far, almost 20 current and former players have partnered with the NBA and WNBA for a new sort of public-service announcement as the world continues dealing with the coronavirus pandemic that is known to have struck about a quarter-million people worldwide, killed nearly 10,000 and has essentially shut down sports around the globe.

"We're able to reach a number probably in the hundreds of millions, but as far as kids go, tens of millions of kids just by pressing send on an NBA PSA," Love said. "So for me, it was considering that community aspect as well as, you know, thinking of young kids now being at home being homeschooled, at-risk youth being homeschooled ... we have to reach them."

NFL draft will be done via in-studio setting



NEVADA — With the Raiders officially setting up shop in Las Vegas

this fall, the league was all set to kick things off in the city early and host the NFL draft there next month.

That plan, however, seems to be a thing of the past.

According to The Los Angeles Times, the league is planning to scrap its plan for a draft in Las Vegas in favor of an in-studio setting with cut-ins from team headquarters when they are ready to make a selection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Planning for the draft is a good example of how we need to think differently, embrace technology and collaborate," NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said in a memo to league employees this week, via The Times. "We will also use the Draft to help support fans and those people impacted in our communities."

"While there have been changes to the way we work and some of our plans, we have an unwavering commitment to upholding the NFL's legacy of unifying and lifting the spirit of America, and bringing out the best in our fans and in our communities around the world. You'll hear more from us in the days and weeks ahead about how we intend to demonstrate that commitment well beyond our fields. And I hope you'll share your ideas on how we can do that."

The NFL announced on Monday that the draft would go forward as scheduled on April 23-25 despite the coronavirus outbreak, but that all public draft events in Las Vegas had been canceled. The league had planned to host the draft on the water in front of the Bellagio hotel and use boats to shuttle players to the stage where the iconic fountains sit.

Based on that announcement, it wasn't clear whether the league still wanted to hold the draft in the city but do so without fans, draft prospects or in some other form. According to the Los Angeles Times, however, the event will no longer take place in the city at all.

The NFL has yet to announce anything official.

Regardless of how it moves forward, however, one thing is perfectly clear: The draft will look very, very different this year.

Former top draft picks still available

Meanwhile, Jameis Winston, Cam Newton, and Jadeveon Clowney didn't have to wait long to find homes in the NFL



In this Dec. 29, 2019, file photo, Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Devlin Hodges (6) is sacked by Baltimore Ravens cornerback Brandon Carr, bottom and outside linebacker Matthew Judon, top, during the first half of an NFL game. The NFL is planning to scrap its plan for a draft in Las Vegas in favor of an in-studio setting with cut-ins from team headquarters when they are ready to make a selection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

when they came out of college.

They were No. 1 overall draft picks.

Now they are finding things moving much more slowly as they search for new homes or contracts this offseason.

Winston, the top pick in the 2015 draft, has been supplanted as starting quarterback in Tampa Bay by Tom Brady and is in danger of being on the wrong end of the NFL's version of quarterback musical chairs.

Clowney, who was the No. 1 pick the year before Winston, hasn't been able to find the megacontract he hoped for in the opening days of free agency and might eventually

have to settle for a more reasonable contract either to remain in Seattle or sign someplace else.

Newton, who went first in 2011, isn't quite on the open market yet but is having an acrimonious breakup in Carolina. The Panthers are signing a replacement in Teddy Bridgewater and giving Newton permission to pursue a trade even though he said he never wanted to leave.

With no trade partners willing to jump for a quarterback coming off a season-ending foot injury, Newton might ultimately just get released and join a list of many players still seeking a new home.

There are talented receivers like Robby Anderson and Breshad Perriman; offensive tackles like Jason Peters and Germain Ifedi; and several defensive players like cornerback Logan Ryan; linebacker Markus Golden; defensive end Everson Griffen; defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh; and safeties Vonn Bell, Eric Reid and Damarious Randall all still on the open market after an early spending spree in free agency.

It's a development that happens each year with players like 2019 sacks leader Shaq Barrett, defensive Robert Quinn and tight end Jared Cook among the players last

season who made a big impact despite remaining unsigned in the opening week of free agency.

The process could be slightly more complicated this year with players unable to meet in person with teams or take physicals with team doctors because of restrictions put in place in response to the new coronavirus pandemic.

That could be especially problematic for Newton, who must prove he's recovered from foot surgery that forced him to miss the final 14 games last season before a team will be ready to take a chance on the 2015 NFL MVP.

With only a handful of

teams still looking for a starting quarterback in free agency, there are few obvious options for either Newton or Winston.

Winston is the first player since the merger to lead the NFL in yards passing one season and change teams the next. But along with the 5,109 yards passing for Winston last season came a league-worst 30 interceptions.

That and the availability of a six-time Super Bowl champion like Brady led to the Bucs making a change and now leave Winston looking for work.

Clowney wasn't nearly as prolific last season with only three sacks in his first season in Seattle, contributing to his difficulty finding the type of contract he wants so far this free agency period.

The market at receiver where Anderson and Perriman are the top available targets has been hampered by the fact that two of the league's top receivers were traded, with DeAndre Hopkins going from Houston to Arizona and Stefon Diggs being dealt from Minnesota to Buffalo.

Then with a draft so rich in receiving talent that a half-dozen more wideouts could be taken in the first round and several others projected as day two picks, many teams are more likely to opt for cheaper rookies than spending money on veterans.

On defense, many teams have already made big moves with Indianapolis acquiring DeForest Buckner in a trade from San Francisco and giving him an \$84 million contract, the Niners signing Arik Armstead to a five-year \$85 million to stay off the market, Miami handing cornerback Byron Jones a five-year, \$82.5 million deal, and Darius Slay getting a three-year, \$50 million deal after being dealt from Detroit to Philadelphia.

There are still some likely cheaper options available with Suh possibly headed to his fourth team in as many years, Griffen and Golden as intriguing pass-rush options and several capable safeties led by Bell, Reid and Randall.

Messi contract a Barca priority as Neymar says yes

SPAIN—Lionel Messi's contract is said to be a priority for Barcelona, who have also received good news on the Neymar front.

Messi has a deal until 2021 with the LaLiga giants, but can leave for free at the end of the season.

If Barca can get that done, it looks like Neymar also wants a return to Camp Nou.

A renewal for Messi is a prime concern for Barcelona.

Messi is top of the to-do list for Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu despite economic problems facing several clubs due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Meanwhile, Neymar wants to return to Barca and is ready

to put pressure on Paris Saint-Germain to get his wish.

According to Le 10 Sport, PSG have not offered Neymar a new deal despite talk they would. The Brazil international is contracted until 2022 at the Ligue 1 champions.

Meanwhile, in New York, Major League Soccer is targeting a May 10 return to play and will consider pushing back its championship game by a month into December.

After announcing a 30-day suspension last week because of the new coronavirus, the league said Thursday it will follow last weekend's recommendation from the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to not hold events involving more than 50 people for eight weeks.

"MLS remains focused on playing the entire 2020 season and is evaluating all options, including pushing back the end of the season and playing MLS Cup in December, as the league did prior to the 2019 season," the league said in a statement.

The MLS championship game had been scheduled for Nov. 7.

On its website, the league announced the May 10 target for a return date.

Teams have played two matches in their 34-game,

regular-season league schedule. Inter Miami, the expansion team co-owned by former England captain David Beckham, had been preparing for its home opener at its temporary stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

MLS held its championship in December from 2012-18, then cut the length of its playoffs last year by changing the earlier rounds to knockouts from a two-leg format.

Last year's title game was Nov. 10.

The United Soccer League said Wednesday the suspension of the second-tier USL Championship and third-tier League One has been extended through May 10.



LaLiga

MLB doubleheaders possible to make up for games

N E W
Y O R K —
Let's play
two? Colorado Rockies manager Bud Black would be down for doubleheaders.

Maybe even a couple a week.

That might be a necessity to make up games once a baseball season delayed by the new coronavirus gets under way.

"In theory, yeah, I think all of us would be up for some sort of doubleheader situation," Black said during a conference call Thursday. "The thing that's going to be in front of all of us is it's going to be the same for everybody. It's got to make sense for the clubs and the players."

Opening day has been pushed back from March 26 to mid-May at the earliest, and both sides are committed to playing as many games as possible.

Translation: Doubleheaders could be on the docket.

"I know that when we're able to safely play, we're going to have to think of creative ways to get in as many games as possible given all the time that's going to be lost," said Farhan Zaidi, the president of baseball operations for the San Francisco Giants. "I don't really have any specific thoughts on that, but I know everybody's going to be thinking through ways to do that."

Meanwhile, two pitchers announced they are having Tommy John surgery and will miss the season whenever it starts: Boston ace left-hander Chris Sale and San Francisco right-hander Tyler Beede.

Major League Baseball announced minor league players shut out of spring training camps amid the novel coronavirus outbreak will receive allowances from teams through April 8, and a plan is under way to compensate those players during the postponed portion of the regular season.

HOLD

From Page 24

been our number one priority," OAA said in an official statement posted at the group's Facebook account and website.

"The spread of coronavirus has created much uncertainty, which has been concerning for all of us. We are carefully monitoring and will keep you updated on the directions and advice of World Athletics, government departments throughout the Pacific and the World Health Organization along with other relevant authorities," OAA added.

Besides the Micronesian meet, OAA has also put on hold two other regional competitions—the Polynesian



AP
Colorado Rockies' Ian Desmond (20) connects for a two-run double during the fourth inning of a spring training baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Tuesday, March 10, 2020, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Minor leaguers will receive allowances of \$400 per week from teams in a lump sum for the next three weeks -- a significant bump from their usual spring per diems of \$100-200 per week. Teams hope that will allow players to cover housing, food and other expenses through the previously scheduled end of spring training.

The Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks halted their voluntary workouts at their shared Salt River Fields complex in Arizona. This was after the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community decided to temporarily cease operations there in the wake of the pandemic.

Some of the Colorado players may travel to Denver with Coors Field open for workouts. The Mile High City sure looked a lot different than Scottsdale on Thursday as a

snowstorm hit the area.

More than anything, Black wants his players to treat this time away like it's December and the season is still in the distance.

Don't ramp up.

Black said that when a timetable is known, the teams will be given approximately three weeks to get back in shape as part of a second spring training. That's plenty of time for a starting pitcher to work his way into form.

"There's no need to throw bullpens. We're a ways away from that," Black said.

Hit in a cage—if one's available. Work out at their gym at home. Or play catch -- with social distancing in mind.

"They get together and go to a local park, they go to a high school, they go somewhere where there's a stretch of grass and they play catch," Black

said. "They're not going to play closer than six feet together, right? You can play catch."

"Guys are on the down low. They're probably not doing much baseball activity right now. There's a sense this is going to be much longer than first anticipated by baseball."

Seattle shuttered its facility in Peoria, Arizona. The Mariners had initially planned to keep the facility open and work with players in small, staggered groups of 10, but general manager Jerry Dipoto

said most of the 40-man roster had gone home.

"As we got to the point yesterday where we pulled the plug there were about 10 or 12 guys that were actually coming down and taking advantage of the workout time," Dipoto said. "And frankly, we were concerned with the idea of group gatherings of any sort, particularly after we got the news yesterday there was a positive test of a baseball staffer down here in Arizona with another club."

NAPA

From Page 24

79-70.

Frank Ferrer led Mawati's balance scoring after registering 17 points, while Paul Quizon added 12, and Arjay Nonato and Rodel Pastrano chipped in 10 apiece. Jerome Directo and Bradley Demapan combined for 16 more points

to help Mawati's cause.

First Game

Mawati 79—Ferrer 17, Quizon 12, Nonato 10, Pastrano 10, Directo 8, Demapan 8, Mateo 4, Reyes 4, Velasco 3.

Ming Yang 70—Giron 14, Ariar 13, Rivera 11, Demonterverde 10, Divinagrancia 10, Broncano 6, Tenepere 4, Jose 4.

Scoring by quarters: 21-

17, 39-28, 59-48, 79-70.

Second Game

Napa 81—Devero 34, Rafols 16, Ege 10, De Guzman 8, Acosta 5, Ebuen 5, Fital 4.

Blue Haus 69—Talanía 18, Demapan 12, Pangelinan 11, Abuy 6, Aranda 6, Estores 4, Peredo 4, Nuguid 3.

Scoring by quarters: 21-16, 38-36, 57-49, 81-69.

REGIONAL

From Page 24

Palau compete in the regional championships and vie for the slots on the North Pacific Team that sees action in the Pacific Oceania Junior Championships in Fiji.

The POJC, which is held either late July or early August, also has a new date—Oct. 15 to 24. Two more regional events have been pushed back with the West Pacific Regional Championships in Port Vila, Vanuatu and the East Pacific Regional Championships in Apia, Samoa now slated for July 20 to 24 and July 27 to 31, respectively.

The West and East tournaments are usually scheduled for either April or May.

"We'll see how things improve so we can make plans with the new schedule. Let's hope for the best," CNMI Junior National Team coach Jeff Race said.

Race and the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association select the members of the CNMI National Team that participate in the North Pacific event based on the players' performance in various local tournaments.

So far, NMITA managed to complete three competitions—the TanHoldings Tennis Classic, Saipan Interna-

tional School Student Council Tennis Tournament, and the Coconut Classic. NMITA had its fourth event—the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic—early this month, but only the opening week matches were played and the juniors singles and doubles games set for last weekend have been suspended, until further notice.

Besides the Bridge Capital Tennis Classic, NMITA still has the CNMI Junior Championships, originally scheduled for April.

"We can't really tell which tournament will go ahead. We just have to go with the flow, keep ourselves safe, healthy, and ready," Race said.



Calls for Tokyo Olympics postponement intensifies

PAGE 21

Saipan Tribune Sports

NFL draft will be done via in-studio setting

PAGE 22



24 MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Micronesian track meet on hold



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI and Guam runners compete in the 1,500m race during the 2018 Micronesian Regional Championships at the Oleai Sports Complex track oval.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Micronesian Regional Championships 2020, along with several other Oceania Athletics Association-sanctioned competitions, has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Saipan was supposed to host the Micronesian tournament on June 13 and 14, according to Northern Marianas Athletics secretary general and OAA president Robin Sapong. OAA will be discussing the new dates of the regional event with the participating island-nations in the biennial competition.



“During this truly unprecedented situation, we firstly want to express our sincere best wishes and thoughts to everyone in our region. The health, safety, and wellbeing of our athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and staff have always

See HOLD on Page 23

Regional tennis tourneys pushed back



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Serin Chung rushes for a baseline return to Helen Kim during last month's Coconut Tennis Classic at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



The North Pacific Regional Championships, which the CNMI Junior Tennis Team has dominated for years, has been rescheduled due to COVID-19.

The regional tournament was originally set for June in Guam, but with travel restrictions in effect across the globe due to the pandemic, the annual competition will now be held from July 13 to 17. The CNMI, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, and

See REGIONAL on Page 23

Napa eases past Blue Haus

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Napa Auto Parts saved the best for last to cruise to victory over Blue Haus, 81-69, during their match in the One Pacific Promotional Basketball League 2020 at the Civic Center Court.

Napa fired 24 points in the fourth period—its best output in a quarter—for the double-digit winning margin in their March 13 game opposite Blue Haus. Ivan Devero anchored Napa's strong finish after recording 12 points, while Paolo Rafols chipped in 8 markers in the onslaught.

Devero led all scorers with his 34 points, making up for a so-so performance in the first period, as he toyed around the defense of Blue Haus in the last three quar-

ters. He delivered 8 markers in the second canto after being held to one field goal in the first to keep Napa in the lead at the break, 38-36.

The former Marianas High School standout then posted 10 points in the third frame, 8 of them came in succession, as Napa earned more breathing room, 57-49, entering the playoff period. Devero was still at it in the final canto and drew enough help from Rafols to hand Napa its second victory in as many games.

Rafols also finished in twin digits with his 16 points, while Brandon Taliana paced Blue Haus after logging 18.

Meanwhile, Mawati drew double figures from four players to beat Ming Yang,

See NAPA on Page 23



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Napa Auto Part's Dick Tibayan pulls up for a jumper against two Pacific Hardware defenders during an earlier game in the One Pacific caging at the Civic Center Court.